

The Bartestree Cross Benefice Group



Statement of Needs and Parish Profile for the appointment of a Rector



The Parishes of Dormington, Lugwardine with Bartestree,
Westhide, Weston Beggard and Withington

Hereford Diocese

Thank you for your interest in the Bartestree Cross Benefice and the diocese of Hereford. We hope you will find the diocese a place of love and support, both practical and emotional. We are a small diocese with little of the theological partisanship you can find elsewhere. We all get on rather well!

We are just launching a revised strategy to address some of the key (and typical) challenges faced by our churches. Our vision statement is clear – Proclaiming Christ and growing disciples. We seek to live that out through our three values of Christlikeness, prayerfulness and engagement. We do not believe in a centrally imposed programme, and encourage each benefice to work out what the living of that vision, by those values looks like in their own context. The resources at the centre of the diocese are to encourage the local to be the best they can be. As priest in the Benefice and Assistant Archdeacon, you will be encouraging others to live into this vision.

Bartestree is a Benefice with a lot of potential. The Intergenerational Mission Project has gained real traction here in a short period of time, and is building relationships, encouraging volunteers, and sharing the Gospel. You will need to be enthusiastic about the sort of collaboration that is vital for this to work. If God is calling you here, you will find a group of willing volunteers wanting to see growth and vitality take root.



The Rt. Revd Richard Jackson

Bishop of Hereford

Ledbury Deanery

Following the reorganisation of the Hereford Deanery in April 2021 to include only parishes almost solely within the City of Hereford, the Bartestree Cross benefice has become part of the Ledbury Deanery. This extends from Colwall and Ledbury in the East, adjoining the Malvern Hills and all the way to Bartestree Cross benefice which abuts the City Deanery with the Parish of Tupsley.

There are 7 Benefices which make up Ledbury Deanery, the largest being Ledbury which continues to expand as an important market town. The Bartestree Cross is the second largest benefice with a population of approximately 5000 residents. The other benefices are varied and mainly more rural.

Like many Deaneries we are wrestling with the challenges of finance, with the current Parish Offer from the deanery not sufficient to meet ministry costs; this shortfall is also evident in Bartestree Cross.

The Bartestree Cross benefice is in something of an intermediate position between the Ledbury and Hereford City benefices, with the large parishes of Withington and Lugwardine-Bartestree being strongly connected to the city socially and economically.

2 (a) General Description of the Benefice

The Bartestree Cross Benefice forms part of the Ledbury Deanery and lies some 3.5 miles to the east of Hereford City. The Benefice area is spread either side of the 2 main arterial routes leading east from Hereford namely the A4103 Hereford to Worcester road and the A438 Hereford to Ledbury road. Although close to Hereford the meadows and fields that surround the City form a natural break and the Benefice has a distinctly rural character being comprised of 3 small and 2 large villages.

The main commercial enterprises in the Benefice are located just off the A4103 in the parish of Withington and include a garden centre, a garage with car sales and servicing and Whitestone Business Park. The 'Business Park' covers an area of about 15 acres with 200,000 sq. ft. of retail, business and office space occupied by such companies as AllPay, Advantage Business Supplies, I & J L Brown, Greendale Carpets & Flooring, Countrystore Whitestone, Shire Stoves and others.

St Michaels Hospice, serving the whole County, is in Bartestree and there is a retirement home 'Orchard House' in Withington.

The area is popular with families and for retirement and there is a mixed age range in all the villages. Although there is some local employment most commute to work.

There are good primary schools in Lugwardine and Withington (and nearby in Mordiford); most other services are accessed in Hereford. The nearest secondary schools are St Mary's RC High School in Lugwardine and the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School in Tupsley.

Gateway Nursery, Bartestree <http://gatewaynurseries.co.uk>

Lugwardine Primary Academy <http://www.lugwardine.hereford.sch.uk/>

Withington Primary School <http://www.withingtonprimary.hereford.sch.uk/>

St Mary's High School. Lugwardine <http://www.st-maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk/>

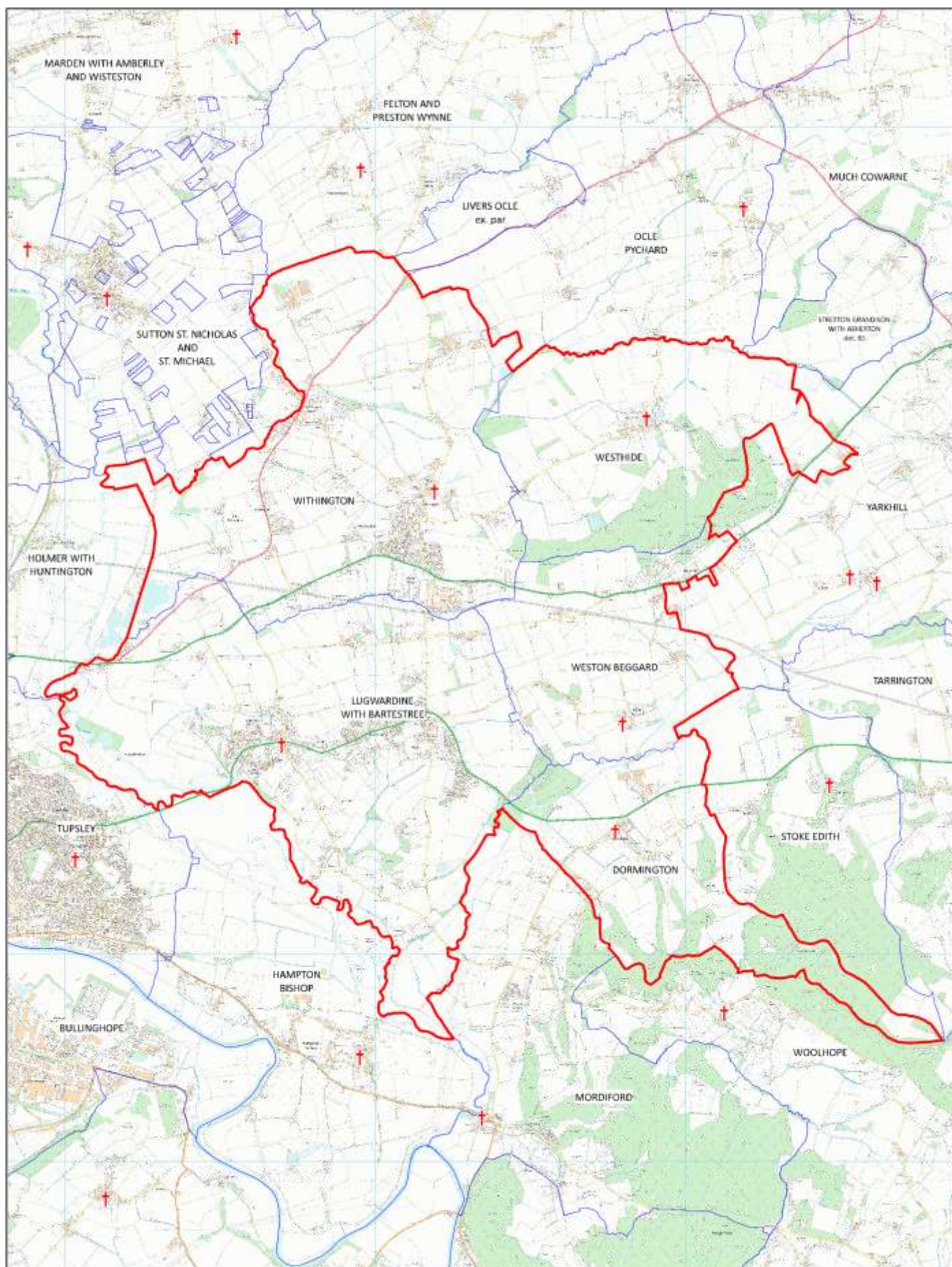
The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, Tupsley <http://www.bhbs.hereford.sch.uk/>

All 5 villages have grown from ancient settlements, some dating back to Roman times and mentioned in the Domesday Book. Each village possesses a beautiful listed church (I or II*) with its own special treasures and we are pleased to say that all are in good repair.

There has been quite major growth in the two large parishes, Lugwardine w Bartestree and Withington which continues into 2022. Neighbourhood Development Plans are in place for the two main Parish Councils to help manage such major growth in the future. Any growth in the 3 smaller villages is very limited.

The 2 major villages of Lugwardine w Bartestree & Withington, because of their proximity & easy access to Hereford, are now virtually satellite suburbs of Hereford. Therefore, newcomers frequently turn to the city for their activities. Their involvement with the local communities is often minimal which is one of our main challenges for the future.

The Bartestree Cross Group



2b The Worshipping Community

DORMINGTON

The village is in a beautiful, rural, but not isolated setting some 5 miles east of Hereford on the main A438 to Ledbury, with a welcoming, friendly and safe environment. It has a population of about 200, of average age circa 50, but including an increasing number of retired people and a few young families. The village is in the catchment area of Mordiford C of E Primary Academy, The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat and St Mary's Catholic Secondary Schools. The church is the only community building in the village and there are no shops or other facilities. There are various community and social activities, usually held in Tarrington or Bartestree village halls in which Dormington has financial shares. However, the church has recently undergone a reordering project including an external toilet and an internal kitchenette and storage space to provide increased comfort for the congregation at services and to keep the church as a relevant building for the wider community. There is still a live faculty which would permit the replacement of the fixed Victorian pews with more flexible, stackable ones. There is a regular bus service between Hereford and Ledbury, which stops in Dormington. There is a small non-conformist chapel in the hamlet of Priors Frome.



The Church of ST PETER, Dormington

St. Peter's Church is a Grade 2* listed building and dates from Norman times. It was extensively renovated in 1877. Nevertheless, the church has some interesting features including a C13th font, C17th memorials and attractive stained-glass. The West window depicts Justice and Fortitude. It was designed by Edward Burne-Jones and installed by (William) Morris & Co in 1902. The East window was installed in 1901 and was designed by Mary Lowndes 1857-1929 (Chair of the Artists' Suffrage League) and Isabel Cloag (1865-1917); both well-respected stained-glass artists.



The bronze door knocker is unique among European knockers in style and type, consisting of the head of a feline beast with large eyes and a ring through its mouth.

It has affinities to the grotesque work at Kilpeck and elsewhere in the area. The original is kept in Hereford Cathedral Treasury for safe keeping. There is a replica on the church door. The church has three bells. The oldest was made by John Finch in 1662. The walled churchyard to the south is carpeted with snowdrops in early spring.

The church has recently had its Quinquennial Inspection, with no major action points arising. In recent years new heating and lighting have been installed and between 2018 and 2021 the new toilet, kitchenette and storage cupboards were added. Sadly, because of the pandemic, we are only now beginning to enjoy the benefits of these new amenities for coffee mornings, soup lunches etc.



The average congregation numbers have fallen since Covid and are about 12 for the Family Eucharist service on the first Sunday of the month at 11am and about 7 for Evensong on the third Sunday of the month at 5.30pm. The church is always open. The PCC meets circa six times per annum.

Most of the regular congregation are 60 years or older and prefer a familiar, simple and traditional service format but are willing to try occasional variations. There are fewer children attending, primarily due to competing secular activities and it has been hard to recruit new families, several of whom attend alternative churches in Hereford. This is a concern which we are trying to address by making the building more attractive for social activities.

We try to encourage those youngsters who do come to services to take an active role in the service by reading, bell-ringing and taking the collection. The annual Carols and Christingles Service and Harvest Festival, with produce auction (raising funds for the education of a child in Tanzania) are popular village occasions with higher than average attendances. We also have an outreach initiative entitled 'Travellers' Rest'. This involves welcoming walkers on a Sunday afternoon, distributing maps of the local footpaths and offering tea and cakes.

Financially, Dormington has increased its Parish Offer by the rate of inflation annually, albeit the benefice does not fully pay its way. The church has adopted the Parish Giving Scheme which has proved to be popular and financially very useful especially during Covid.

The church is fortunate in having a loyal band of flower-arrangers, cleaners and grass-cutters; several of whom are non-churchgoers. This demonstrates the affection in which the church is held in the local community. Several of these people are also regular givers. We are fortunate in benefitting from a recent, substantial legacy; the interest from which can be used to maintain the fabric of the church and the upkeep of the churchyard, facilitating preventative maintenance.

LUGWARDINE (with Bartestree)

Lugwardine (treated as one unit with Bartestree for these purposes) is the largest of the 5 villages with a population of about 3000 due to expansion over recent years of new housing developments. Lugwardine/Bartestree forms a ribbon development along the A438 and could best be described as semi-rural. There is a diverse age range with families representing a large part of the population. The village has 2 pubs, village shop, hairdresser, a thriving village hall, sports pavilion, nursery and a regular bus service.



Lugwardine Primary Academy, a non-church school is in Bartestree. The school has capacity for 210 pupils and retains a close connection with St Peters Church. We have very good links with the school, where the previous incumbent was on the governing body and both he and the Missioner regularly visit, holding assemblies, workshops and joining in with after school clubs. The school enjoy coming to church to visit for festivals, group visits and a Year 6 Leavers Service. This relationship building has led to more families coming along to church to try the Family Service and culminated in a confirmation service in May 2022 held at St Peter's where eleven children and one adult from across the Benefice, were confirmed by our Bishop during a wonderful celebration that involved the newly formed Benefice Choir.



The village also contains the only Catholic Secondary school (judged as Outstanding by Ofsted) in the county. Many of the children from the village and from our church attend this school. The county's only hospice St. Michael's, is also within the village (which has its own pastoral care team). They are keen to make connections with us and have offered their amazing community facilities to us.



The Christian Fellowship Lugwardine Chapel which is located down a lane a short distance from the parish church. The congregation there has now diminished following the death of the long-standing pastor. We do have a good relationship with this church and have used their modern facilities to host one of our Alpha Courses and for some of our young people's work in the colder weather.

The church of ST. PETER Lugwardine

This is believed to date from Norman times and has a splendid new Nicholson pipe organ which was installed in 1993. Godwin tiles, produced in the local tile works and renowned in cathedrals worldwide, are in abundance. The tower has a peal of 8 bells, and a group of regular ringers. The church lacks modern facilities, but a steering group has been established to prepare plans to install these and we would hope that our new Rector would support the PCC in this endeavour. The church is open daily.

The former chapel at Bartestree closed for worship many years ago and is now a private house.

The Lugwardine churchyard was closed in the late 1800s and recently handed to Herefordshire Council for maintenance. A large Burial Ground, approx. 200m south of the church and linked by a grass track is looked after jointly by the PCC and the Parish Council.

The regular congregation numbers 15-30 and has a mixed age range. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere with people volunteering to read during services, decorate the church with flowers, be a sideman, make coffee and serve cake! A Eucharistic service is held on 1st and 4th Sundays, with a non-Eucharist service on the 3rd Sunday. Services start with or are followed by coffee and time for fellowship



Lugwardine is a part of the Intergenerational Mission project. The mission here began just over two years ago when our Missioner Christine collaborated with the previous incumbent to develop

our Family Service, which now meets at 11 am once each month. Many people from our existing congregation also attend this service along with five or six regular families. Attendance is usually between 25 and 30 people. The service follows a now established structure and is more interactive and less formal than our regular services which adds to the mixed ecology approach we aspire to.



During the pandemic this service would often happen outside in the Vicarage Garden and has continued to do that during the summer months. Some of our families are a part of our strong and vibrant PCC.

Many of our families are involved in attending and helping with 'Pizza Club' once a month for our younger congregation. As well as 'Emerge' for our older children giving our younger members the opportunity to explore their faith in a fun and engaging way. We have held other activities for the community such as Pumpkin carving and Pancake making, and our Christmas Tree Festival was such a success we are repeating it this year, a great event for the whole community and local businesses.

St Peter's also has a thriving and enthusiastic PCC who are passionate about sustaining the church and its surroundings. The church is also used every month by the Lugwardine with Bartestree Community Cafe who are part of Talk Hub <https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/hubs> in partnership with Herefordshire Council. They meet once a month and have raised funds to install a new composting toilet (faculty approval pending).



St Peter's Church Lugwardine PCC

WESTHIDE

St Bartholomew Westhide



Westhide is the smallest village in the Bartestree Cross Group with a population of around 80. The demographic reflects that of rural Herefordshire, mainly older people and few children. There is a strong sense of community, much of which is centred around the Church.



Wreath-making

For example, the 13th century Bell Tower is the venue for 'Belfry Nights' during the warmer months. Effectively this is a bring and share bar which attracts around 20 locals each time and fulfils the social role of a local pub.

Although there is no water or W.C we have learnt to work around this and the church successfully hosts a range of events - concerts, cheese and wine evenings, and a seasonal wreath making workshop.

Our normal Sunday service congregation is about eight (the same as the electoral roll). A small congregation but 10% of the village population! These services are held in the chancel which creates a more intimate and informal atmosphere, helps with singing and is easier to heat. We always offer coffee in the Bell Tower following a service. Harvest and Christmas services naturally attract a higher attendance. Pre-covid these were around 30 and 50 respectively. The last two carol services have been held outdoors in the Churchyard; despite rain and wind these still had congregations of c 35.

Our service pattern is:

- 2nd Sunday Morning prayer
- 4th Sunday Family Holy Communion.

These are clergy-led as a rule but we are happy to take the occasional service ourselves.



Getting ready for a Concert

It is difficult to predict the numbers of weddings and baptisms. In the last three years there has been one funeral, one wedding and one baptism. There are two weddings planned for next summer.

The church is in a good state of repair with recent projects including re-hanging the bells and relocating the pulpit. The roof will need some attention in the next 5-10 years having been re-tiled about 30 years ago.

We keep the church open all the time and so far this hasn't been exploited.

To date St Bartholomew has always managed to pay its way and we fully expect to continue to do so. This year we plan to increase our parish share by 3%. Much of our income comes from regular giving via the Parish Giving Scheme, supplemented by fund raising. Concerts, Silent Auction, Garden Parties and H.Art are our primary methods. Our aim is to have fun whilst trying to raise money and we do both!

Whilst keen to raise money for the church we are also mindful of our need to be charitable. To this end we collect for the food bank, donate our Harvest collection to Send a Cow, contribute to a school in Tanzania and nominate a local charity to benefit from our Lent Lunch. At present several members of the congregation are actively involved in supporting two families who have recently fled Ukraine and who reside nearby in Weston Beggard. This support has been practical, organisational and emotional.

We try to make use of the Church whenever we can and hope that once people come in they find it to be a warm and welcoming experience.



Getting the Garden Party skittles ready

WESTON BEGGARD

Weston Beggard parish is a scattered rural community of some 165 souls of a mixed age range. The Church is the only community body (excluding Parish Council) and building in the parish (there are no clubs and no pub, shop or hall) and serves the communities of Weston Beggard and Shucknall. It is the hub for most activities, including presentations, lectures, concerts and meetings.

The Church of ST JOHN THE BAPTIST Weston Beggard

Originally constructed about 1200, although the site may go back to Roman times. The building in its present form dates from the Victorian era.



The churchyard is 'open' for burials and contains 6 Grade II listed memorials as well as a Grade II listed 15th century churchyard cross. There is one Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone from the Second World War.

The building is showing signs of its age and has a damp problem which is normally managed by routine activity. In the past 3 years much work has been done to improve the building's facilities to make it more attractive and comfortable. These include:

- Repointing of drain gullies and flushing of culverts.

- The refurbishment of the Victorian floor tiles

- The conversion to LED lighting

- Installation of additional heating

- The purchase of pew cushions

- The installation of a composting 'loo'

- The removal of a 40 feet high 80 metre leylandii hedge and replacement with a mixed native woodland hedge as part of the Queens Green Canopy scheme.

The PCC received grant funding towards the cost of most of these projects.

We participate in the eco-churches scheme.

A team of volunteers keep the building clean and tidy and undertake churchyard maintenance (including grass cutting) and prepare seasonal flower arrangements.



The refurbished Victorian tiles



New seat covers



The arrival of the composting loo



Working on the new hedge

The Church (the people)

Regular services are held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. The 'normal' congregation is between 5 and 8 with festival services attracting a larger congregation. We have a volunteer organist, and enthusiastic hymn singers, but no choir. In the past we have had various music groups including the Benefice choir to help lead the music.

The congregation (and those on the parish register) is fairly small, but loyal and welcoming, proactive and have the energy to organise and 'get on with things' as can be seen from the work done recently to the building.

We have a hardworking, energetic and conscientious PCC, with churchwarden, secretary and treasurer; a lay chair and 4 others.

Visitors often comment on how lovely and welcoming the church looks.



A Baptism



An outdoor service

The church is in a very rural location, all but in a farmyard and surrounded by hopyards, orchards and fields of livestock, and weather permitting services often take place outside the church. This creates a real association with the country which is something the PCC are aware of and wish to develop.

Unfortunately due to the church's isolated position, there have been instances of vandalism and the church is now only open by appointment. Notices to this effect are in the church porch and requests for access are normally answered within about 15 minutes.

The church is on the route of a local footpath and benches have been installed in the churchyard – the loo is also available to walkers.



Carols in the Barn



Easter Week Walk

In the past 3 years the annual carol service has been held in the local farmer's barn and a very special atmosphere is generated with the carols and soft lighting; this service has attracted about 60 people of all ages from across the parish and wider.

An example of the community spirit is the monthly 'Coffee & Chat' which was started some 20 years ago and has become a stable and successful event. It was initially intended to give those who live alone, or work from home, a chance for an informal gathering and mutual support. Over the years it has grown and is now regularly attended by people from all over the benefice and beyond. During lockdown the C&C team formed a nucleus to provide help and contact to others – this included

welfare calls and visits, shopping and transport. It has also become the 'engine room' and many ideas for activities and fund raising originate at these meetings.

The PCC supports the Toilet Twinning scheme and makes an annual donation.

At Easter 2022 Weston Beggard hosted the Sunrise Service (at 6.00am!) with 10 attendees.

Our finances are sound and our annual budget generally runs at a small positive balance. We have always paid our Parish Share. We rely on event income and the generous support of regular donors, but the aging profile of these and the non-engagement of the younger population is a concern for long term financial security. We expected financial problems during the covid lockdown but increased donations and some grants averted these.

The financial balance relies on fundraising activities and these are well supported and enthusiastically organised by a willing band; events have included: Burns Supper, quiz nights, ceilidhs, Christmas fayre, harvest supper, treasure hunts and picnics. In 2022 an adventurous group held a sponsored sleepover in the church and welcomed in Easter at a sunrise service.



The 'sleepover' team!



The Harvest Supper

We consider ourselves to be an able, active and enthusiastic but small community and would wish for our incumbent to work with us to meet the challenges and embrace the advantages of our rural setting to maintain and grow the spirit of the Church and community.

WITHINGTON

This is the second largest of the villages with a population of over 2,000. There has been considerable expansion in recent years with the building of a large number of new housing developments. The population increase due to the latest two developments is in the order of 10% which raises challenges for the future. The age range is mixed.

The commercial activities referred to in the introduction are in this parish. There is a village shop, post office, fish and chip shop, a nursing/residential home, a playing field development (2010) with football pitches next to the modern village hall (October 1999), and a regular bus service.

A range of activities take place in the village hall including use by clubs and societies, fitness activities and social events. A (non-church) primary school was moved to its present modern building in 1984 and has a capacity of 120 from pre-school up to year 6. The school is 200 metres from the church and there are strong links with the church.

There is a Baptist chapel at Whitestone adjacent to the A4103.

The church of ST. PETER, Withington.



The grade 2* listed church of St Peter has its foundations in Norman times, with many additions over the centuries: C13th tower, C14th tall slender spire, C15th Chancel screen. More recently this century restoration work has been carried out on the tower and spire for which grant aid was received.

The East window has been renovated, a new infra-red heating system has been installed, and more recently the clock was changed from a 'hand wound system' to an electric autodriven system. The organ was restored in 2016/7 with a grant from HLF as well as funds raised by the community and is of excellent quality with an amazing range of sound, well loved by visiting organists.

A faculty for the kitchen and accessible toilet was obtained in 2018 and following 2 years of fundraising and numerous grant applications, the £80,000 needed was eventually reached and work started in January 2021. By September 2021 the new facility was in full use. There is now a fully fitted kitchen with a serving hatch, an accessible toilet, chair storage cupboard and other storage cupboards between the tower ringing chamber and the nave aisle.

In front of the kitchen the former raised floor was replaced with a level oak and tiled floor which is used as a hospitality area on numerous occasions such as for the weekly summer "pop-up Café" and for refreshments following church events.

It is also a useful area for meetings and informal services such as 4th@4 family services, and holiday craft/play activities.

We are in the process of obtaining a faculty for the chancel repairs in collaboration with the Church Commissioners. In addition, the south roof needs to be re-tiled in conjunction with the chancel repairs. Grant applications will be needed for our portion of the work once the faculty is granted.

At the last Quinquennial (2017) no serious issues were identified; the next inspection is imminent. The churchyard is open and additional grave spaces have been approved for burials to the south side of the church. We are a supporter of 'Caring for Gods Acre'.

Worship.

The pattern of services has been holy communion at 9.30 on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays; and on the 4th Sunday there is the recently introduced Family Service known as '4th@4' led in conjunction with our Intergenerational Missioner; and the fifth Sunday is a benefice service in alternating parishes.

There is a core of members who are very active in maintaining the life of the church both in worship and social activities. There are also many non-church-going members of the community who regularly help in various ways, keen to maintain the community life that is built around the church. We have recently registered as an Inclusive Church.

For our communion services we use especially printed booklets suitable to the church seasons, as do the rest of the Benefice, using Order 1 contemporary language, and coffee is usually served afterwards. Two local organists take it in turn to play for our services. The average attendance for these services is about 15 people, mostly of 60+ rarely with any children present, so we are hugely indebted to our Intergenerational Missioner Christine who has introduced new life into our church.

Intergenerational Mission in Withington

Withington is part of an Intergenerational Mission Project. The mission here has developed a brand-new congregation coming to the "4th@4" family service which runs monthly and has continued to do so during the pandemic, with every service for the first year held outdoors. There are around seven or eight families who attend the service frequently and attendance can be anything between around 15 and 45 people.



The service begins with refreshments and follows an established pattern and is very interactive where families can move around and explore the meaning of the readings using practical activities that often take them outside the church itself into the well-maintained churchyard. Several of these families are new to church and as relationships have become more established, some have recently joined our PCC.



The Mission has also established a drop-in holiday club 'Family Tuesdays Together' each week in August, that encourages families to come into the reordered church, to hang out together, play games or do some craft and enjoy delicious homemade cakes. Using the church in this way helps people to feel at home in the building and its grounds and helps build relationships with one another and with our group of helpers.

Life of the Church



Open the Book is run once a month in Withington Primary School with a team of 7 helpers including 1 from Lugwardine.

We have excellent links with Withington Primary School, who regularly use the church for their own special occasions such as Christingle and Harvest, and for curriculum-led events.

Over the years we have held sessions for the school from the 'Experiences' programme; Harvest, Easter and Christmas.

We run a yearly programme of fund-raising and social events supported enthusiastically by many non-church goers. These events include the weekly summer pop-up café in the church and winter monthly big breakfasts in the Village Hall, (*this latter also raising money for local charities*),



PopUp Cafe



Big Breakfast

also musical events, film or supper evenings, quiz, summer garden lunch party and sometimes exhibitions. We consider that the main value of these events in addition to fundraising is to reach many people who are not part of our church family and to build the community spirit of the village.

Venues for our events are in the Church, the Village Hall or in people's homes.

We have found that the church is an excellent venue for musical events, having very good acoustics, so we try to arrange a season of musical events.

For Autumn 2022 that included a hugely successful organ concert, a Sax quartet concert, and the Hereford Church Singers with their Advent Carol Concert.



October 2022 Organ Concert



November Sax Quartet Concert

For a few years we have cooperated in a joint fundraising effort with Weston Beggard with a Burns Night Supper, which has been very successful and continues this January.



Macmillan Coffee Morning

We regularly hold a well-supported Macmillan Coffee morning event for the whole community which in September 2022 raised £600. We also support The Children's Society with home giving boxes.

We usually generate around £1,000 for local charities with our Big Breakfast programme.

In the church there is a book exchange library and a food bank deposit point.

The church is open every day and has been a member of Herefordshire Churches Tourism group for about 20 years – Withington Church is featured in their Churches Tourism leaflet.

We support Eco Church and are working towards its goals. We have toilet twinning in place.

The church has an excellent ring of 6 tower bells, (acknowledged to be amongst the best ring of 6 locally) which are used when there are enough ringers available.

The church has a Wi-Fi connection, and we use "SumUp" and 'Give A Little' for donations as/when required. We have a donation button on our "A Church Near You" pages.

We are members of the Parish Giving Scheme.

In spite of all our efforts so far, we have found it difficult since Covid to raise sufficient to meet and improve our share obligations.

However we are a very lively church with lots of community involvement and events happening, and we hope to increase our financial giving in the future.

2 (c) Organisations & Finance

There was a presentation to the Benefice in April 2018 about the Parish Giving Scheme. All the parishes wished to be involved and the take-up is progressing in spite of Covid causing difficulties in giving.

Parish Offer Scheme:

Church	Offer 2021	Offer 2022	Offer 2023		
			Draft	plus/-	%
Lugwardine w Bartestree	13650	13650	13650	--	--
Dormington	6027	6208	6500	292	4.7
Westhide	5704	5800	6000	200	3.4
Weston Beggard	4968	4992	5280	288	5.8
Withington	10000	10000	10500	500	5.0
TOTAL	40349	40650	41930	1280	3.1

The only local trust for which the priest is automatically a member is the “Lugwardine Charities”. There is the Elizabeth Byworth Trust which is an educational charity in Withington and the previous priest had been invited to be a trustee.

Previous incumbents have been involved as school governors, though this is not a pre-requisite.

2 (d) Property

There is a Diocesan House in Withington, The Beeches on Withies Road. This was used as a curate’s house from July 2015- June 2018

2 (e) Ministry

There are 2 retired priests with PTO who live in the Benefice and who have provided assistance with services. There are no lay readers or lay ministry teams but non-eucharistic services are now frequently lay led.

There is one Safeguarding Officer who covers the whole benefice. All PCCs are kept up to date with their Parish Action plans through the online Parish Dashboards, and progress is being made with online courses and Safer Recruitment.

3. THE MISSION OF OUR CHURCH

3 (a) How our Benefice sees itself

There is a good strong, co-operative working relationship across the Benefice and members are keen to work closely with our new priest and to offer support both with ministry and administration and to relieve him/her of administrative tasks where appropriate.

As a group, the churches in the benefice have been involved in various schemes for 10 years;

- SPAB/Building Maintenance – surveying churches to identify a maintenance programme for the fabric of each church.
- Messy Church – this ran in Withington for 4 years but lack of supervisors led to its demise and was replaced by Open the Book.
- Open the Book – has been running successfully at Withington Primary School for five or six years.
- Intergenerational Project began in May 2021 and operates in Withington, Lugwardine and Sutton (which is in the neighbouring Maund Benefice). Some aspects of the mission benefit the whole benefice and community.
- Walks have taken place for the past two years in Holy Week and in the summer months between our churches with hospitality at the end of each walk.
- Walks from Dormington Church – leaflets available (and afternoon tea on summer Sundays).
- A Pilgrims Path Route has recently been created that is circular and leads from church to church around the benefice that is open to walkers and pilgrims alike.
- “Experience” days for our Primary schools – Experience Harvest, Easter, Pentecost
- Eco Church – most churches are ‘working towards’.
- Each of our churches either has or is working towards having a pew free social area to make more social use of our churches. Three have toilets, two have kitchens with more reordering planned

• Special Services 2021/2022

Church	2021			2022		
	Xmas	Easter	usual	Xmas	Easter	usual
Dormington	27	25	12	N/A	20	11
Lugwardine w Bartestree	90	34	17	N/A	39	25
Westhide	15	6	8	N/A	3	8
Weston Beggard	20	17	9	N/A	8	5
Withington	102	52	21	N/A	38	20

3 (b) What is Intergenerational Mission?

Intergenerational Mission is a Project that was born out of the strategic plan of Hereford Diocese which put together a successful bid for funding from the Church Commissioners, match funded by the Diocese and the parishes involved.

The aim of Intergenerational Mission is to grow churches both spiritually and numerically for all generations particularly with the focus on reaching children and young people, with each Missioner leading the formation of new worshipping communities and nurturing faith among all generations. The IM project in Lugwardine with Bartestree, Withington and across to the neighbouring benefice of Sutton St Nicholas was commissioned in May 2021 and has in a short time made quite an impact.

How does the IM Project work to support parishes?

The IM project uses a tool called the growth cycle, which is based on the work of the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell. This cycle looks



at how the churches already have opportunities for people to grow in journeys of faith. By prayerfully considering what is already happening, we look for where and how God might be at work, the Missio Dei and we join in to create opportunities for people to engage with journeys of faith. There is an emphasis on work with families and young people, who are the most obviously missing generations from most of our congregations. By working with both incumbents and with PCCs we have created opportunities for each church to be more representative of the communities

they serve. In these parishes this has meant creating mixed ecology of worship, which means that different styles and types of services have been created.

What does Intergenerational Mission look like?

Our newest congregation is at Withington called 4th@4 and it is very interactive and gives families opportunities to explore faith together.

Our Family Service at Lugwardine has changed time to 11am, also beginning with refreshments, has a more relaxed structure and in the summer months has been held in the Vicarage Garden. Creating species for journeys in faith have come through our Alpha Courses and Confirmation Classes that led to 11 children and 1 adult being confirmed.

We have also introduced opportunities for children and young people to gather so that they may explore their own journeys of faith. Our Confirmation Classes have evolved into Pizza Club and our group for young people aged 11+ is called Emerge.



The impact of the project

The following video was created for the joint PCC meeting held in August 2022 to reflect on what has happened so far and to think about creating another bid for the future.

[HYPERLINK "https://youtu.be/pRDwH0czW7o"https://youtu.be/pRDwH0czW7o](https://youtu.be/pRDwH0czW7o)

A few quotes from this meeting,

“As an adult I’ve never really found a congregation that fitted until recently. I feel very much at peace and to be a part of the church at Withington at a time when Intergenerational work is taking place. It feels like we have created a space at church that really suits young children. It doesn’t feel like it is just for kids either. I love seeing our children interact with the more mature members of the congregation, these are really important relationships.” BB



“The impact has been that when we get home my husband wants to talk about it; he does not come from a church background. ..my son asks when he can go again after Pizza Club.” AJ

“We’ve lived in the village for 20 years but only since ‘4th @4’ started have we felt part of the community. It’s not just about having fun but it has engaged us; about building faith and building relationships; it’s part of the calendar now.” TD

Intergenerational Mission Statistics

Regular Services	Average attendance 2021 Under 35/over 35/Total	Average attendance 2022 Under 35/over 35/Total
Family service (Lugwardine)	9/19 = 28	12/16 = 28
4th @ 4 (Withington)	4/23 = 27	10/18 = 28
Special Services/Events		
Harvest Service (4th @ 4 Withington)	6/21 = 27	18/26 = 44
Harvest (Family Service Lugwardine)	2/25 = 27	8/18 = 26
Crib Service (Withington)	29/46 = 75	
Easter Day Family Service	29/39 = 68	13/33 = 46
Confirmation Service	N/A	25/75 = 100 (actual)
Family Tuesdays Together	8/8 = 16	14/10 = 24
Easter Family Drop in	N/A	19/19 = 38
School Services / Events	Lugwardine Actual Attendance 2022	Withington Actual Attendance 2022
Harvest in Church	109/10 = 129	75/75 = 150
Easter in Church	150/15 = 165	82/51 = 133
Christmas 2021	60/35 = 95	
Experience Easter	NA	42/16 = 58
Year 6 Leavers	41/5 = 46 (both schools)	
Clubs (<u>Benefice wide</u>)	Actual numbers	
Emerge (11+)	8	
Pizza Club	16	

3 (c) Strategic Planning

Hereford Diocese promoted a model of Mission Action Planning based on the three Shared Priorities below – the following summary for Bartestree Cross is based upon a consultation with parishioners conducted by the diocesan team during the vacancy.

Growing Christian Disciples

Already doing:

- Lent groups,
- Friday evening discussion and meditation group (Dormington)
- Continuing to build on social contacts
- Working with the two primary schools
- Developing church amenities and facilities
- Working towards inclusive churches
- Intergenerational Mission Project;
Leading to; confirmation, Alpha courses,
Groups for young people

Future plans and ideas:

- More sharing across the benefice when running social / fund raising events,
- Worship at other times,
- Developing pastoral care teams and visiting,
- Continuing special services – pet, healing service, songs of praise.

Contributing to the common good

Already doing:

- Food bank,
- Two parish magazines,
- Pop-up café and other parish coffee groups
- Activities for children: Pizza club for confirmation follow-up
- Open the Book
- Benefice Choir

Future plans:

- Develop, improve and maintain social media presence,
- outreach to isolated people,
- more opportunities for social engagement,
- offer invitations
- help with transport.
- Reaching out to the farming community

Reimagining ministry

Already doing:

- Lay led worship in 3 churches,
- Two new interactive family services expanding the congregations at. Lugwardine and Withington
- Making the most of social contacts (coffee mornings, Big Breakfast, etc – all platforms for growth
- A good social media presence; Facebook, BCG website, A Church Near You, and You Tube.
- Open the Book in Withington
- Loop and Soup – walk/meal/worship

Future plans:

- Dormington - better liaison with Community Association,
- Developing better facilities in churches,
- Exploring different times and dates for worship

3 (d) Looking to the future

All the churches are well cared for and receive support from regular attenders as well as those who attend infrequently or not at all. Together they assist with cleaning, maintenance, opening the church, flower arranging, mowing and care of churchyards etc.

As with many “historic” buildings some of the churches are very cold in winter and uncomfortable and some lack water and drainage. This can make church attendance difficult though this is being dealt with by improvement schemes in most of the churches;

- Dormington has installed a toilet with hand basin adjoining the church porch and has a kitchenette at the back of the nave. A faculty is being sought for storage and pew replacement. Wi-Fi is in the church.
- Withington has recently completed a new kitchen, storage cupboards and an accessible toilet. There is also a new hospitality area with modern tables and chairs together with Wi-Fi.
- Lugwardine is in initial stages of designing changes for the interior of their church. They have Wi-Fi.
- Weston Beggard – has installed an outside toilet and undertaken numerous interior improvements.
- Westhide is considering possibilities for Community use of the church.

We believe a progressive increase in the activities and profile of the churches is essential. We need especially to consider:

- Attracting people under 60
- Attracting families whose pattern of activities preclude attendance on Sundays
- Encouraging people over the threshold
- Making church more relevant to the community

There is an urgent need for the communities to rediscover the distinctively Christian contribution a parish church can make in a village especially in the post covid period. We now need to consolidate and build upon the changes we have begun to ensure the future of our churches.

4. THE VICARAGE

THE VICARAGE AT LUGWARDINE



Clergy accommodation for the Benefice is provided by the Vicarage at Lugwardine, a purpose-built property in what was the garden of the old vicarage and is immediately adjacent to the church. It is a 2-storey property with sitting room, dining room, study, hall, cloakroom, large kitchen, utility, 4 bedrooms, bathroom, garage and good-sized gardens. It makes an ideal family home, is close to a bus stop and 3.5 miles from Hereford city centre. St Marys RC High School is 100 metres down the road. The Crown and Anchor, the local pub, about 200 metres further!

5. DESCRIBING THE ROLE

Associate Archdeacon role Bartestree Cross Group of Parishes

As part of the role of vicar of the Bartestree Cross Benefice is the additional responsibility of Associate Archdeacon. This role is a 20% of the appointment, which gives an 80/20 split between parish responsibilities and Diocesan responsibilities. It comes with an annual stipend uplift of £1000 (not pensionable).

This role is being seen as a development opportunity for someone who feels called to the role of Archdeacon to experience the range of archidiaconal duties and to learn how to inhabit the role. A minimum of 6 years in incumbent status parochial ministry is required.

The person appointed will work closely as a colleague of the Archdeacon of Hereford who will delegate work appropriately. To avoid any conflict of interest the person appointed will not be expected to operate as Assistant Archdeacon within the Ledbury Deanery.

Main Responsibilities

- To work strategically with the Archdeacon of Hereford and the Archdeacon of Ludlow to share good practice and co-ordinate property, fabric, finance and mission planning matters across the diocese to ensure parity and coherent policy.
- To give excellent pastoral and strategic support to clergy and parishes.
- To help parishes in vacancy to discover their vision and facilitate them in the production of their statement of need.
- To promote and direct excellence in safeguarding practices.
- To engage with and facilitate the resolution of disputes.
- To deal with complaints at parish level including any investigation work.
- To contribute to the Archdeaconry Missional & Pastoral Committee..
- As a member of the Well Being & Pastoral Management Groups, to visit sick clergy and supporting colleagues facing a difficult time.
- To conduct ministerial development reviews (MDRs).
- To encourage and support parishes in fulfilling their parish share commitments and teaching good stewardship.
- To deputise on DAC visits.
- To take on such tasks as the Diocesan Bishop requires and such tasks that are delegated by the Archdeacon.

If you have a commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of the clergy and their families; enjoy finding creative solutions to the day to day challenges facing the church and are exploring a vocation to archidiaconal ministry, we would love to hear from you.

6.PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for a motivated and enthusiastic person who sees their ministry as a thriving partnership between themselves and the surrounding church community.

Someone who;

- Can build on the work that has been started in these parishes
- Will support and continue the work of the IM project.
- Is comfortable with planning and delivering the mixed range and approach to services
- Who loves people, community and understands village life
- Is open to join in with God's mission in our parishes.

We wish to appoint a person who cherishes the best of our church traditions, whilst also being prepared to explore different approaches to worship and ministry.

Qualifications

1. An ordained priest within the Church of England
2. Satisfactory completion of Initial Ministerial Education

Personal Qualities

- A developed and maintained prayerful, spiritual life
- Collaborative and consultative
- Personable, approachable and compassionate
- Resilient and a good sense of humour
- Diligent and persistent

Skills

- Efficient and organised
- Good working knowledge of IT and using social media
- Articulate and able to communicate in a wide range of settings
- Able to handle conflict sensitively and effectively
- Able to build and sustain healthy relationships
- Able to make connection with new residents especially younger families.

Committed to the full involvement of women and men in all aspects of leadership and ministry in an inclusive church.

Aware of and committed to equality and safeguarding issues

Proven Experience and Competencies

*This is covered by a separate sheet.

7. SUPPORT WE CAN OFFER

Running a benefice is very much a team affair, and as members of this team the parishioners are keen to give every support possible to our priest. We do not expect the priest to work 24/7 and to do everything. Sometimes we may not be able to do 'things' ourselves but usually we know someone who will. We believe that we are a supportive group of churches and see ourselves as a group of friends who are not afraid to get involved. Please ask.

All group expenses are dealt with by the Benefice Treasurer who shares the cost out between the 5 churches using an agreed formula.