



The Ross Parishes are seeking a Part-time Associate Priest (House for Duty)

in the Ross and Archenfield Deanery,
Hereford Archdeaconry,
Diocese of Hereford

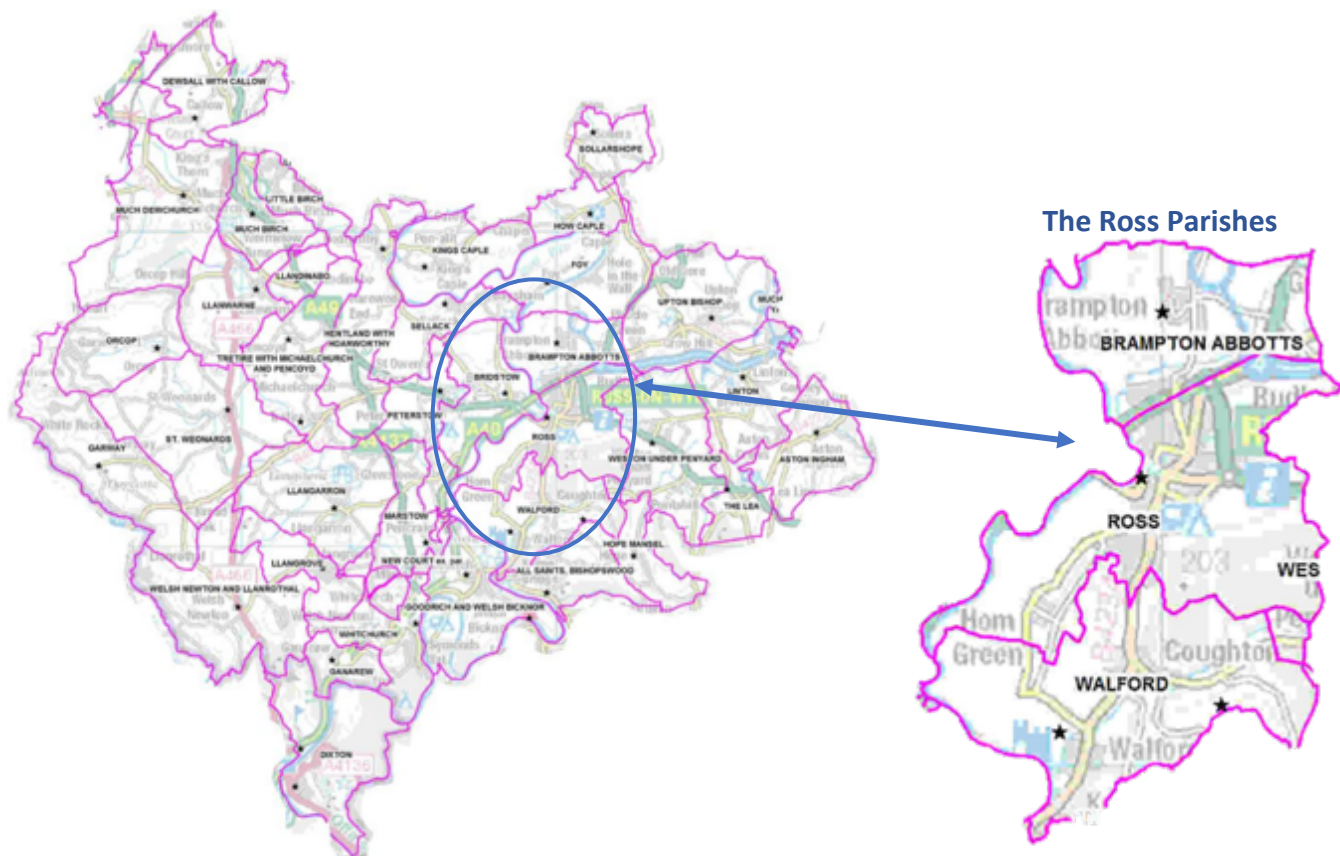
**Parish Profile and Role Descriptor
Spring 2025**



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Ross and Archenfield Deanery



Introduction from the Wardens of the Ross Parishes

Welcome to this information pack. Thank you for your interest in us and in this role. We are very excited about the direction of travel for our benefice and the people who might journey with us next.

Most importantly, please be aware that **we are concurrently advertising two posts: this one and a Life Link Chaplain** – this may provide an opportunity for couples looking to relocate. We are open to a degree of creativity with both posts depending on circumstances – please don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like to discuss this. Please see <https://rossparishes.uk/recruitment> for more details.

This post of Part-time Assistant Priest (with or without accommodation in Walford Vicarage, would suit a creative, mission-hearted, energetic and prayerful priest who is committed to working with and building the local community, enjoys working collaboratively and has a passion for intergenerational mission and ministry in a rural setting.

It is a really exciting opportunity, our congregations are growing, the average age is falling, there is much good will and many people to share the load. The more we grow the more we become attractive to others. We have an experienced ministry team and hope you might feel called to come and join it.

We hope to inspire you to explore whether God might be calling you to ministry here among us and with our newly appointed Rector.

The Revd. Preb. Kelvin Price has very recently been appointed Rector of Ross and we are eagerly awaiting his arrival at the end of April. Kelvin is currently Rector of Ludlow, where he has led a benefice that has been on a very similar journey to ours over the past decade.

We are advertising this Associate Priest post at the same time as advertising a new full time LifeLink Chaplaincy post working in our local secondary school, the Ross Parishes, and our deanery. This is part of a wider project linking school, church and home life to inspire and grow faith, hope and love among young people and families in our parishes and deanery. The LifeLink Chaplain role is a salaried post open to suitably qualified lay or ordained candidates. These two posts might be attractive to a couple. We are open to being flexible, please try us!

What these three posts have in common is our deeply and long-held 2020 Vision to “grow inclusive, intergenerational churches” in the Ross Parishes with a mission “to inspire faith, hope and love in the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds in Ross-on-Wye and the villages around us”. Working with us, these three new postholders will help us take new strides in taking this vision and mission forward.

So, this is a time of change, it is also a very exciting time to be exploring joining us.

We hope you want to find out more. Please do get in touch if you would like to talk with us or explore further.

You will find the contact details you need at:
<https://rossparishes.uk/recruitment>

The Wardens of the Ross Parishes

Gay Chinn, Murray Alston (Walford)
Mark Sanderson, Bryan Jones (Ross)



The Revd Preb Kelvin Price, Rector Designate of The Ross Parishes writes:

I am looking forward to starting my new role as Rector for many reasons. Having the opportunity to be part of the process for apportioning other new clergy to grow God's mission for the Ross Benefice is especially exciting. My hope is with the right people in post we can grow disciples and show forth kingdom values to our entire community within and outside the church.



The Right Reverend Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford writes:

Welcome to the Diocese of Hereford! We may be the smallest mainland diocese in the Church of England, but we think small is beautiful. It means you can know your colleagues and be known and we hope supported to exercise your best ministry.

We believe the local is the best place to discern God's call. Our parishes and benefices are the centre of the diocese not the Diocesan office. Our diocesan strategy seeks to unite us around a common purpose of 'Proclaiming Christ and Growing disciples' lived out in three values of Prayerfulness, Christlikeness and Engagement. We recognise our parishes and clergy are diverse and we encourage people to live out these things in line with their own giftings, individual and communal.



We have just started a rolling programme to help embed the values in our churches. 2023 was a year of prayer, with events around the diocese, including communion services on the hills covering every deanery, exploring prayer workshops and more intense times of prayer for our common life. 2024 is a year of faith, seeking to grow our discipleship, and 2025 will be a year of outward looking engagement with our communities. The senior staff seek to model these values and join with parishes in activities to deepen our spiritual life.

I hope you will feel led to join us in this beautiful corner of God's creation, in particular to consider the Benefice of Ross, Walford and Brampton Abbots. It is a place of great potential, gifted people and excellent community relationships. May you know God's wisdom as you prayerfully consider this opportunity.

The Revd Sheila Anthony, Rural Dean of Ross and Archenfield Deanery writes:

Ross and Archenfield deanery is situated in a beautiful part of the country. We are a small deanery of seven benefices which encompasses the market town of Ross-on-Wye and many small villages covering a large area.

You will be joining us at an exciting phase as Hereford Diocese is currently looking at a new strategy and, in this deanery, we are also focussing upon pastoral reorganisation. There are new clergy replacements in the deanery too.

There is a warm welcome waiting for all our new colleagues, and we very much look forward to working together in these exciting times. We are fortunate to be supported by many volunteer clergy, we are also fully committed to equipping and enabling lay ministry to all ages.

The Ross Benefice has recently appointed a new Rector who will take up the post in May 2025. We are also appointing a secondary school LifeLink Chaplain with the intention of increasing our ministry and connection to young people, their families and schools with the local churches.





Vision and Mission in the Ross Parishes

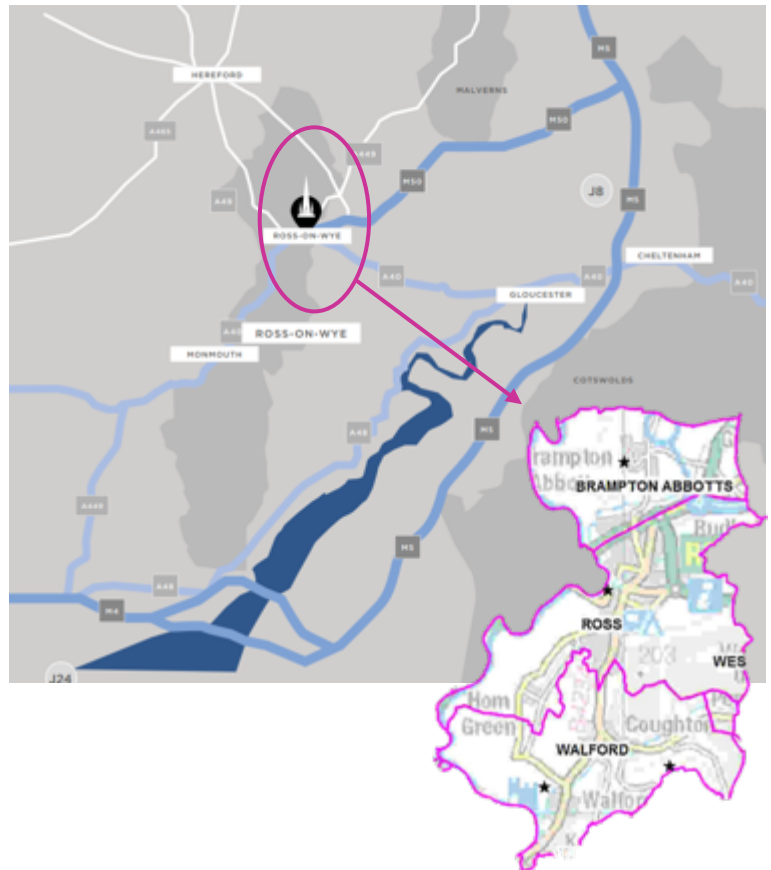
The Ross Parishes – our context

We are currently a benefice of three parishes – made up of a market town and two rural villages linked closely.

The spire of St Mary’s Church, Ross-on-Wye can be seen for miles and Ross itself is looked to for shopping and services including a community hospital, four primary schools and one large secondary school so it is a natural centre for local people of all ages.

The benefice population is currently approximately 14,000 and growing – nearly 50% of the population of the Ross and Archenfield Deanery.

We are set in a National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and attract many tourists visiting the Wye Valley. But we also have a very mixed demographic.



Shaping Mission and Ministry in the Ross Parishes

Our 2020 vision and mission...

Our current vision and mission flowed out of a process of listening and discerning to renew our vision and calling in autumn 2019/spring 2020. Together we asked what we heard God calling us to be and to do over the coming decade to serve the people of the parishes entrusted to us.

Out of it came a strong sense of a continued and strengthened call from God to be passing on faith in Jesus Christ to people of all ages and backgrounds in and around Ross-on-Wye, inspiring faith, hope and love in local people and communities. We saw an exciting vision of growing intergenerational and inclusive churches where people of all ages and backgrounds could find a welcome and a home.

This 2020 Vision, encapsulated as “Growing as an Inclusive, Intergenerational Church among people of all ages and backgrounds” and our Mission of “Inspiring Faith, Hope and Love among the people of the Ross Parishes and beyond” now shapes our mission, ministry, decision making and planning as parishes. We have continued to hold annual spring vision days as a focus for giving thanks and renewal as we seek to continue to listen to God together and adjust our spiritual compasses for the new year ahead.

Implementing our 2020 vision and mission

To implement our 2020 vision and mission we shaped our mission and ministry, planning and reporting around our key priorities. These broadly map against the Five Marks of Mission and growing intergenerationally and inclusively.

Each priority has at least one lay leader holding that portfolio as a member of St Mary's PCC, working in collaboration with the other PCCs.

Inspiring Faith Mark of Mission 1: Proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom (TELL) Mark of Mission 2: Teach, nurture and baptise new believers (TEACH)

This priority covers inspiring and nurturing faith among people of all ages and backgrounds. We know that for many people today the journey to and in faith is made up of many little steps, including points of first connection, opportunities to explore, to respond, and to grow in faith lifelong.

This wide portfolio covers the many connecting points that we have in our community including Toast and Toddle, Craft Groups, Christmas tree festivals, concerts, civic events, national events and more, as well as our important Life Events ministry of Christenings, Weddings and Funerals. We are proactive about offering opportunities to explore faith, such as: Paddle and Praise, Messy Church; The Youth Choir; Primary School work with assemblies and 3 Open the Book Teams, Experience Easter, Alpha and other explorers courses. We regularly offer the opportunity for confirmation and a rich programme of Bible Study, Book Groups, Lent courses, Prayer Groups, the GROW Youth Group for teens, workshops, camps, retreats, and more.

Inspiring Hope Mark of Mission 3: To respond to human need by loving service (TEND)

This priority is about care, but also about offering hope in troubled times when so many people of all ages are under many pressures. We seek to engage with our communities in an outward facing way and build strong relationships in the community and with civic structures, for the common good. This includes our extensive ministries of Pastoral Care; bereavement ministry; the Ross Community Larder in St Mary's Hall; Warm Spaces; Collaboration with the Ross Community Development Trust, the RBL, Ross Hospital Chaplaincy; becoming a Dementia Friendly Church; prayer groups/chains; our extensive ministry in residential and care homes.

Inspiring Love Mark of Mission 4: To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation (TRANSFORM) and Mark of Mission 5: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the of the earth (TREASURE)

We have made great strides in becoming an Eco Church with a Silver Award and making links with local environmental charities such as EnviroAbility, to take common action for good. St Mary's is a Fairtrade Church. We have a branch of the Ross Mothers' Union with its practical and campaigning emphasis on justice, peace and combatting violence. We have many opportunities for collaboration with our primary schools and John Kyrle High School inspired by the Ross philanthropist John Kyrle (whose 300th anniversary is this year).

Our next steps...

1 Growing an Intergenerational Church We are encouraged that our many linked approaches to connecting with local people of all ages and backgrounds is starting to bear real fruit, and now we need to build on that. The LifeLink Chaplaincy Project and this post will help us pioneer new approaches to inspiring faith, hope and love through connecting school + church + homelife/community in our market town and rural parish settings.



2 Growing an Inclusive Church... We are an Inclusive Church, and this is very important to us. We welcome all, irrespective of gender, sexuality, ability, intelligence or background. This year we are working on widening and strengthening our welcome and inclusion as parishes. As part of this all three PCCs welcome the opportunity to offer Prayers of Love and Faith in the Ross Benefice.



The Ross Parishes belong to the diocesan and national Inclusive Church Networks.

Parish Census and deprivation summary

Parish population (2021): 981

	Parish	Diocese	National
% aged 0-19	16%	20%	23%
% aged 20-44	21%	25%	33%
% aged 45-69	40%	36%	31%
% aged 70 & over	23%	20%	14%
% Christian	53%	55%	46%
% non-Christian religion	1%	2%	11%

Parish deprivation rank (IMD 2019): 5405

(1=most deprived parish in the Church of England, 12,239=least deprived)

For more detailed census & deprivation info: see <http://arcg.is/IRaS4CS>
<https://www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats> and
<http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-england/poverty-map>

Number of churches in parish (2024): 1

Parish Code: 180253

Walford Parish and the people who live here

Walford is a scattered parish of approximately 1100, some of whom live in fairly isolated areas and small settlements.

The housing is mixed, as are the backgrounds and ages of the population.

St Michael's Church is positioned on the main road between Coughton and Walford with easy access and parking. The prominent war memorial on the road at the entrance to the church drive gives a visual marker and focus, positioning the church within the life of the wider community - whether regular church attenders or not.

Along the main road towards Ross and Coughton is **Walford School** with which we have a very good relationship. There is a thriving pub, The Mill Race, which is well supported by locals and where you will receive a warm welcome. The well maintained and busy **Village Hall** in the centre of Walford itself, is used by many different groups. Walford Scout Beavers pack meet here and they attend and take part in the annual Remembrance Service in the church. The village hall runs seasonal fetes and markets which draw in the community and help support the hall itself. The church has a reciprocal arrangement with the village hall for overflow parking around big events.

The civil parish extends into Bishopswood, the neighbouring settlement, so covers a fairly large geographical area. The council maintains a "community support scheme" aimed at tackling loneliness amongst the many elderly people of the parish. The scheme puts on regular coffee mornings based out of the "hub" at the Walford Village Hall, monthly lunches out of Bishopswood Village Hall and the occasional outing, bingo or fish and chip lunch. The council has financed the installation of a handful of defibrillators for community use as well as recently joining the SmartWater scheme run by the police to help tackle theft in the community. The Parish Council also oversees the running of the local canoe launch, proceeds from which help to keep the precept down for parishioners.



The Walford Parish Worshipping Community



Our hallmarks as a church have over very many years been great hospitality, warmth of welcome, care, imagination, and a willingness to try new things. We currently have a number of linked congregations with worship in different styles – Eucharistic, lay led morning worship, All Age, meeting on Sundays, plus our popular midweek monthly Paddle and Parise group which meets in a home. Here’s a flavour of our recent story and where we hope to be going.

Background

The decade from 2010 was largely very successful for us and was a time of growth. We had the resources, imagination, and courage to reorder the back of St Michael’s Church to give a flexible space for hospitality and activities for all ages and for the wider community. This includes a toilet and kitchen and flexible seating with stacking chairs and tables.

By 2016 this reordering had helped us successfully achieve our goal of growing as a worshipping community and growing younger. The older members of our congregations were incredibly generous and farsighted in their support for our work with children and families – and attended and participated in our family



services which grew from strength to strength with a strong core of families. We began with one family service a month and increased this to two as numbers and frequency of attendance grew.



This was all built on the foundations of **Paddle and Praise**, our strong links with **Walford Primary School** including regular assemblies, **Open the Book** (a team from St Mary’s Ross and from Walford) and school visits to church. **Christmas** and community events such as Remembrance have been strong for us with a huge Nativity Service attended by local families for whom it is a strong Christmas tradition. We hosted **community events** of topical importance, with great hospitality and speakers that drew people from the wider community. We also held popular monthly community coffee mornings – hosted some months in local houses and sometimes in church.

Our House for Duty minister at this time had a special heart for outreach into the community among all ages - dog walking is a great way to meet people! He and his wife also used the well positioned Rectory for parish barbeques and other outreach events. Over time, we even had a go at Champing with some camping events for young people and families in and around the church! All this led to the confirmation of a number of our young people and their parents.

Our Covid Years

Covid was a real blow to us as such a relational church but we were creative!

St Mary’s quickly set up a weekly online benefice Eucharist which we participated in attending and in helping to lead. Shortly after that we initiated a fortnightly All Age Zoom online service open to the whole benefice. This was really attractive to all ages – as highly participative and imaginative as our previous All Age Services had been, with an average attendance in the 40s. Our All Age Planning Group also met online and we widened the number of people of all ages who played a part in leading aspects of our



Zoom worship. We built in community time when we could chat and catch up with each other before worship. We sent out craft or activity thought-starters beforehand so we could make or do together online. We developed ways of being able sing "together" with lively songs and hymns on the keyboard, plus actions songs and prayers. National all age worship resources that engaged and involved all ages gave us a framework for going on growing in faith through the church year. We celebrated birthdays and shared how we were coping, prayed together, laughed together and encouraged one other.

We also shared in the benefice phone ministry where we kept in touch with members of the congregations and wider community linked with the church and the Walford Community. Members of the church were part of establishing the Walford Community Support Scheme.

As soon as we could as the weather improved we took our worship outside with memorable outdoor services and picnics and the chance to catch up with each other and get together safely.



Post Covid rebuilding

Since Covid many of our faithful regular older members of our congregation have become too frail to attend church regularly or have died. Despite all our efforts to keep a rhythm of worship going and to stay in touch, many of our teens lost the habit of coming to church even though many of them regularly participated online through Covid and came to outdoor worship.

We are now in a period of rebuilding and getting back out into our community. There are very encouraging signs from the steps we have taken so far.

We have relaunched **Paddle and Praise**,

connecting a new generation of preschool children and their families with church and helping them take first steps in faith. Over the years many of these have come for baptism from Paddle and Praise and have gone on to become members of the church - and that is what we hope for again.

We are regrowing a **monthly All Age service** from the bottom up with some coming from Paddle and Praise. Before Christmas we welcomed our newest, youngest, member aged 7 days! Our oldest All Age member is in his 90s.

Our children are learning by experience our values of hospitality, relationships and creativity and the rhythm of prayer and worship through the year. Sometimes our All Age services are informal communions and sometimes non Eucharistic, and weather permitting, outside again in the summer.

The other Sundays are currently generally Eucharistic with occasional morning prayer. There is scope for reintroducing a second all age service in the month.



Our festival and special services are growing again. Remembrance was much better attended by the community once more this year. Christmas was almost back to preCovid levels, with a well attended carol service, Walford School coming for its Christmas service, and standing room only at our Christmas Eve nativity service. This service has become a traditional way in which extended families in the parish mark the start of Christmas. We have a huge Christmas Eve scratch band which is the highlight of Christmas for students and young adults returning home. We held a very

successful All Age Candlemas Eucharist and lunch, St David's and St George's Days and have more specials planned through the year.

Our hopes and plans for the future

We are determined to continue to grow again and to reach more effectively back into the lives of the people of our parish – and we are encouraged by our progress so far but recognise there is a long way to go.

Our goals are reaching our community once more and strengthening community relationships, rebuilding our worshipping communities, deepening our ties with Walford School and reconnecting with our teens.

We also love marking significant moments in the lives of local people coming to St Michael's for prayer, baptisms, weddings and funerals – as they have done for centuries. We hope to see that Life Events ministry grow again too.

We using our financial assets boldly to make a new growth project possible for this decade – providing the seed funding for a "Life Link" Chaplain in John Kyrle High School in the Ross Parishes in partnership with the wider deanery and the diocese. In this way we can go on sowing and nurturing the seeds of faith and keeping in touch with local young people as they move from primary to secondary school.

We look forward very much to sharing in all this and working closely with a new Associate Priest for the benefice living in Walford Vicarage at the heart of our community, and our lives.

Ross Parish



Ross Parish and the people who live here

St Mary’s Church is the one Anglican church in Ross-on-Wye and uniquely positioned to serve the people of the town. Its landmark spire has stood for centuries at the heart of the community serving as a beacon of faith, hope and love in the town.

Parish Census and deprivation summary

Parish population (2021): 10462

	Parish	Diocese	National
% aged 0-19	20%	20%	23%
% aged 20-44	26%	25%	33%
% aged 45-69	34%	36%	31%
% aged 70 & over	21%	20%	14%
% Christian	53%	55%	46%
% non-Christian religion	2%	2%	11%

Parish deprivation rank (IMD 2019): 5057

(1=most deprived parish in the Church of England, 12,239=least deprived)

For more detailed census & deprivation info: see <http://arcg.is/IRaS4CS>
<https://www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats> and
<http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-england/poverty-map>

Number of churches in parish (2024): 1

Parish Code: 180244

There is a close and strong relationship between St Mary’s Church and our town of Ross which we have been developing as a priority over recent years and for an increasing number of people and groups, St Mary’s is now seen as a natural place to be.

The population is increasingly diverse as expansion brings people attracted to the Border area from further afield. Two big population groups are the long term ‘Ross-ians’ with a strong sense of local history and culture, and (increasingly ageing) retirees who have arrived in the past twenty years. Younger incoming families are taking advantage of the varied local employment opportunities, increasingly work from home or commute to Hereford, Gloucester and wider afield. Local farms employ large numbers of seasonal workers and some EU citizens have made Ross home. There is a strong sense of community with many community facilities and opportunities including the Community Hub, Community Garden, rowing and sports clubs, music and drama, uniformed organisations. The two doctors surgeries, community hospital and associated welfare organisations are important supporters of town and village life.

The town community larder is housed in the basement of St Mary’s Hall, just across from the church. There are many users of all ages and backgrounds. We also offer a Warm Space through the winter in the hall and Tea and Toast. We have built good links with the Ross Community Development Trust. One of our clergy team is Chaplain

to Retail and Industry in the town. We also exercise other Chaplaincy roles – to the Sea Cadets, the RBL, and more organisations would like to have Chaplains if we had the capacity. We highly value our opportunity to inspire faith, hope and love in the schools in the town – see the section for more on our growing schools ministry and chaplaincy.

St Mary's is the Civic Church of the town and hosts services for Ross Town Council, the annual Remembrance Service, and occasionally Herefordshire Council. It is set aside as a church for services of national significance, and has thus hosted services at times of national mourning and celebration such as the death of the late Queen, and the Coronation of the King. But on a day-to-day basis St Mary's is a place of faith, hope and love – and our desire is for all ages and backgrounds to find here a welcome and a home. Sometimes the church will be buzzing with toddlers or teens, adult craft groups, Messy Church or school visits and worship. Sometimes local people will be marking significant life events with weddings, christenings or funerals - we are there for the “ow” and the “wow” moments in life and our bereavement group and dementia friendly church offer support to many. Sometimes the church will be empty and will echo with the silent prayer of centuries, inviting visitors to prayer today. There is a daily rota of welcomers and our visitor's book is testament to the wonder and love people experience from spending time in St Mary's.

The Rector of Ross with a small team volunteer team has conducted regular ward rounds and offers pastoral care to patients and staff of the town's Community Hospital. Recently the NHS has appointed a dedicated chaplain to work across a number of local community hospitals including Ross and we hope to work with them. We value being able to offer support to local people and people from the surrounding area at times of need. Through our local pastoral visiting team Holy Communion and pastoral care are also offered to those who cannot attend church.

The worshipping community life of St Mary's

The sympathetic and imaginative reordering of the building, completed in 2021, has resulted in a church that has the best of both: historic architecture and modern conveniences. St Mary's has superb heating, lighting, and sound; an unobtrusive projector and screen, kitchen area and toilets, and well equipped children's resource room. It is accessible and the seating allows for creative use of the nave. This means that St Mary's has become a sought after venue for concerts, book launches, drama, exhibitions, school visits and much more but most importantly it is a highly functional building for worship.



The [principal service](#) on a Sunday is a Common Worship Sung Eucharist at 9.30am. The first Sunday of each month Intergenerational Eucharist is hovering around an attendance of 100. In addition we have a committed and regular small congregation joining us live online (also later in the week) through our streaming of this service. A lively workshop “Sunday Kids” is held each week for young children, in the children's room at the back of church – they are just far enough away to be unobtrusive but loud enough to know they are there and having fun, as the service progresses. Our youth choir joins the adult choir on the first and third Sundays of the month and greatly enhances our worship.



Each Sunday there is also an 8am said Eucharist, and for several months a year there is [Choral Evensong](#) (during the summer months this is taken “out & about” around the deanery and beyond). St Mary's is well known for its excellent choir, musical director and organist. Over the last couple of years we've held a successful series of late afternoon seminars in St Mary's while the choir is “out and about”, currently [Faith @ Five](#).

A midweek Eucharist is held on Thursday mornings and a monthly Messy Church on Thursday afternoons. Daily morning prayer takes place on Zoom with a strong congregation who share in leading. There are regular prayer groups which meet online and in person, as do several Bible study groups. St Mary's also hosts Just B, our bereavement support group and we are a dementia friendly church.

Festivals are important to us, they are an opportunity to connect with people across our town and villages when everyone is celebrating together. We try to ensure that we offer a variety of ways to reach people of different ages and backgrounds. We celebrate [Christmas](#) in style where congregations now exceed pre-Covid levels with (in 2023) nearly 300 people attending the traditional carol service, 344 for the Crib Service on Christmas Eve and 240 people came to *Carols Under the Spire*, out in the churchyard and an atmospheric Midnight Mass. Every other year we hold a [Christmas Tree Festival](#), in 2023 over 80 town organisations entered and decorated a tree. Our schools and organisations, such as, Beavers and RBL enjoy their carol services.

We are growing intergenerationally Our work with young people and families is starting to rebalance our demographic to become more truly intergenerational. Opportunities include Toast and Toddle, Messy Church (including Messy Vintage), our Youth Choir, and a fortnightly craft adult group. Discipling of young people is offered through our Grow Youth Group and Explore Confirmation group. It is a delight to see the generations mixing and valuing each other. We also provide chaplaincy to our largest, dementia focused residential home where we have a communion service and 'big' service each month, and monthly services for another smaller home and three sheltered housing complexes. A recent staffing change at Westbank Home means that small numbers of residents can now join Sunday intergenerational services at St Mary's twice each month, also at Messy Church. On other occasions they join in with our weekly streamed 9.30 service.



We are growing as an inclusive church The Ross benefice is a registered [Inclusive Church](#). We believe in being churches that welcome and serve all people in the name of Jesus Christ; that interpret the Bible inclusively and that do not discriminate against people on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, ethnicity, nationality, race, age, marital status or sexuality. We have a long-standing tradition of caring excellence – we do things to the best of our ability to express our devotion to God, but with patience and kindness. We try hard to involve all those who need to take next steps, in the running of the church; our PCC is growing and the number of people involved in running an average 9.30 Sunday service is usually upwards of thirty.

Life Events Ministry Life Events – christenings, wedding and funerals - are important to us. Canon Sandra Millar, formerly Church of England Life Events lead, has been inspirational in guiding the development of our thinking and practice, and continues to support our life events and intergenerational development. St Mary's has a significant number of christenings, weddings, and funerals each year as would be expected of a market town church, and it has a reputation for doing such services well. At life-changing times and beyond, we are there for all local people with the comfort, hope, and joy of Christ.

St Mary's is a building at the heart of the community Since the reordering of the building we have worked hard through many partner organisations and businesses, not least [the Friends of St Mary's](#), to use the church building imaginatively for secular purposes. Events take place frequently, drawing both locals and visitors into the church. See our weekly newsletter and especially the monthly events mailing for current details <https://rossparishes.uk/newsletters/>

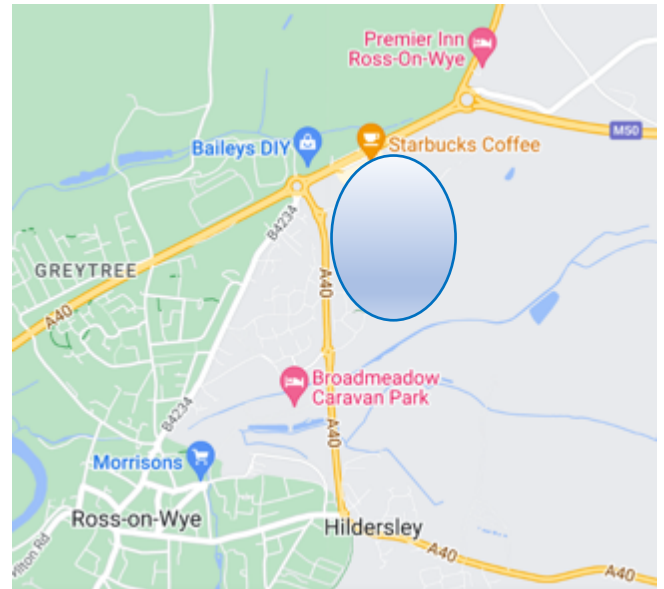
Ecumenical Relations and Churches Together in Ross and District

We greatly value working with colleagues from other churches in the town. St Mary's plays a full (and growing) part in the life of Churches Together in Ross and District. CTRD acknowledges that by working together "as one body" we can achieve far more than any single congregation and we can share resources and best practice. As the largest church building in the town, St Mary's naturally, but not always, hosts CTRD events and services and we are pleased to do so. We host the ecumenical Ross Community Larder in St Mary's Hall. We are working with the ecumenical team that mentors students in John Kyrle High School and we are working together to develop chaplaincy in the school too. Another recent venture is to develop a group of street pastors, following a model in use in Hereford City, to support people in the town on Saturday evenings. <https://www.ctrd.org.uk>



St Mary's Garden Village

St Mary's Garden Village is a large new development just outside the Ross ring road. It was started the year before Covid and designed as an intergenerational community. The housing sizes and types are mixed throughout the estate with bungalows, terraced and detached houses built to attract and mix a range of ages and sizes of household. There is also a mix of social and owner-occupied housing. A small community hub building has recently been completed with a children's play area and small raised bed "allotment" plots. There are cycle and walking routes and an outdoor gym area and also a wetlands and a "boathouse" venue for events.



The naming and branding of St Mary's Garden Village gives a natural connection between the SMGV housing development and St Mary's Church – the church spire can be seen from many parts of the development and the village formal gardens have their own "mini-spire" sculpture echoing St Mary's.

A number of residents are now part of the life of St Mary's church but it has also been our hope to offer some community opportunities at St Mary's Garden Village in collaboration with residents - such as coffee and chat, Messy Church pop up, Café church pop up, Toast and Toddle etc. Now that the Village Hub has opened and there is a management committee and a residents' association there is opportunity to increase a church presence.

Brampton Abbotts Parish

Parish Census and deprivation summary

Parish population (2021): 932

	Parish	Diocese	National
% aged 0-19	18%	20%	23%
% aged 20-44	19%	25%	33%
% aged 45-69	41%	36%	31%
% aged 70 & over	22%	20%	14%
% Christian	57%	55%	46%
% non-Christian religion	2%	2%	11%

Parish deprivation rank (IMD 2019): 5142

(1=most deprived parish in the Church of England, 12,239=least deprived)

For more detailed census & deprivation info: see <http://arcg.is/IRaS4CS>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats> and

<http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-england/poverty-map>

Number of churches in parish (2024): 1

Parish Code: I80224

Brampton Abbotts parish comprises a traditional cul-de-sac village about 1.5 miles from Ross plus the separate Greytrees area of housing which lies within the civil parish of Ross.



In the village is the historic closed church of St Michael and All Angels, notable for its association with the architect, W D Caroe. Its idyllic rural position allows views over to Ross, where the spire of St Mary's is clearly visible, and beyond to the Black Mountains in Wales.

The village hall was badly damaged by "The Beast from the East" and was renovated and reopened in 2023, a testament to the hard work and cooperation of the local community. During the period when neither the church nor the village hall were available, worship took place in the churchyard in the form of a Forest Church.

There is also a nursery school, Oak House, which has close ties with St Mary's in Ross. Brampton Abbotts Primary is a church school (actually situated in Ross parish, and effectively St Mary's Church School). A housing development of 10 new houses, St Michael's Grove, is due for completion this August. This is by far the largest single addition of houses in the village and will inject new life and personality.

Monthly worship is in the village hall, and six times a year in the St Michael and All Angels church. The Easter, Harvest Festival, St Michael's patronal and Remembrance services are typically held in the church building. Some residents also attend the regular services at St Mary's.



Our Local schools

There are 17 Primary schools, one Secondary school and a number of Nursery settings in our deanery. Within the Ross parishes there are 4 primary schools, each with an on-site nursery, 3 independent nurseries and a high school. The churches have excellent and growing relationships with all the schools.

Schools ministry is a high priority for us – we know that although 95% of the children and young people of our country do not attend any church (and that is the same for us here), most of them ARE in school - giving us the opportunity to inspire them to explore faith and to grow in hope and love.

Moreover, national research also shows that at primary age 84% of children are interested and very open to exploring faith - and that is our experience through our work in our schools here. Expanding those connections and opportunities is a priority for us.

Primary and nursery schools

Walford School is within walking distance of Walford church and although it is not a church school we currently work closely in and with school.

One of our lively Open the Book Teams goes into school twice a month and we also normally lead assemblies twice a month.

We envisage our new Associate Priest strengthening these relationships and finding more opportunities to link school, church and the lives of local families. This Christmas for example we once again welcomed the school and parents to church for their carol service and invited everyone back to our Christmas Eve crib service which was standing room only! Our aim is to build more and more points of connection through the year.

'Open the Book' teams regularly visit the schools, and all Year 6 pupils are presented with a copy of the Scripture Union booklet 'It's Your move', written to help pupils make the transition to secondary school, we have also led workshops around this publication in two schools, this year. On occasion, pupils have enjoyed participating in all-day workshops at St Mary's with themes such as Easter, Christmas and Remembrance. Our aim is for all young people, their families and staff, to have opportunities to explore faith through the work we do in school, the relationships we forge, and through the growing involvement with the life of our churches through the school and church year.



Brampton Abbots CE Primary School is our church school, Despite the name, the school is in the Ross Parish, having transferred from their outdated premises in the village in 1987. Members of our congregations serve on the governing body and the Rector is an ex-officio governor. Our ministry team regularly lead Collective Worship. The school is part of a federation with **Bridstow CE Primary School**, which is just across the river in a neighbouring village parish.

Ashfield Park Primary School is the largest primary school in the area and is located just beyond our churchyard, a short walk away. For many years we have welcomed the staff and pupils to church for events, festivals and more. The visiting OtB team is an ecumenical group.

St Joseph's RC Primary have staged several productions in St Mary's and a number of their pupils belong to our Youth Choir and worship with us with their families.

Oak House Nursery, a highly successful nursery based in Brampton Abbots holds events, at least termly, in St Mary's.



The LifeLink Project

Linking school + church + homelife
across Ross and Archenfield Deanery



The Church of England vision for education is of serving the whole of the country and supporting young people in growing up to “live life in all its fullness” and national research has shown that faith is most likely to

grow when the spheres of school + church + homelife are linked. In response, the Diocese of Hereford has recently appointed chaplains to work in the Hereford Academy and the Bishop of Hereford’s Bluecoat School, both in Hereford with a special “LifeLink” focus on connecting school + church + homelife.

The Ross and Archenfield Deanery has also a long-term vision of reaching the young people of our deanery with the good news of God’s love for them by working with all our deanery primary schools and the one secondary school in the deanery and is now seeking to appoint a “LifeLink Chaplain” to work in John Kyrle High School. Our deanery LifeLink Project will foster a common set of collaborative approaches to working with our deanery primary schools and on up into secondary school strengthening the school + church + homelife/community linkages. As well as working towards appointing a LifeLink Chaplain we have established a new deanery schools/benefices network to share resources, learn together and support one another.

Alongside the schools work the Deanery LifeLink Project aims to see the development of a market town and two rural LifeLink Young People’s Hubs – based on St Mary’s, Ross and on two other strategically placed rural settings in the deanery. Each of these will, over time, pioneer approaches linking school + church + homelife and we expect to see at least one Young People’s Fresh Expression in the deanery.

We value working ecumenically and members of other churches are part of the schools network. We have also been developing the project in collaboration with the ecumenical mentoring team that has been working for many years in John Kyrle High School. We hope that this ecumenical collaboration will continue to develop as we work together in our communities.

John Kyrle High School, Ross on Wye

John Kyrle High School is situated in Ross Parish and we now have the opportunity to strengthen our links with the one secondary school in our town and deanery. Our aim, in collaboration with the diocese and deanery, is to appoint a Chaplain to work in the High School, Ross Parishes and the deanery, so that the connections and relationships we make in primary schools can continue and grow through secondary years and beyond, to inspire lifelong faith, hope and love.



John Kyrle High School has a mission to serve the young people, families and communities of Ross and the surrounding area. While not a church school, JKHS wants to see all students have opportunities to find meaning and purpose in life and to grow up with the skills and resources they need to enable them to live fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society. The school has a highly positive ethos of encouragement and team working among staff and students and is looking forward to welcoming a chaplain to join the team.

We are a good fit to work together as parish church and town school sharing a common mission to serve the young people, families and communities of Ross, and, with other local Anglican and ecumenical churches, the wider area too.

Collaborative Ministry and Mission in the Ross Parishes

Team working through the vacancy

Following the last rector's move, the benefice is being led through the vacancy by our wardens in collaboration with our rural dean, the Revd Sheila Anthony. They are ably supported by our parish administrator, by our SSM and local, retired and visiting clergy, our readers, our PCCs, and growing teams of lay ministers.

Our staffing complement normally includes a full-time rector, a part time House for Duty Associate Priest, and we regularly have a curate training with us. We are also hoping to appoint a full time LifeLink Chaplain.

The Ross Parish Officers (PCC)



Bryan Jones BEM
Churchwarden



Mark Sanderson BEM
Churchwarden



Rachel Lewis
PCC Secretary



Roy Milnes
PCC Treasurer

The Walford Parish Officers (PCC)



Murray Alston
Churchwarden



Gay Chinn
Churchwarden



Sanna Drummond
PCC Secretary



Karen Chinn
PCC Treasurer

Brampton Abbots Parish Officers (PCC)



Matthew Hawkes
PCC Secretary



Elaine Leney
Treasurer

2020 Mission Implementation Portfolio Leads / LifeLink Hub Team

The lay members of this team are PCC appointees with briefs to take forward the mission priority areas of faith, hope and love (the Five Marks of Mission) in the Benefice, with the Rector.



Peter Reynolds
Inspiring Faith



Anne Morris
Children, Schools



Paul Cummings
Inspiring Hope



Melanie Mellor
Inspiring Love



Julian Hallett
Inspiring Love



Rosie Winyard
Inspiring Love



Preb Kelvin Price
Rector (May 25)



Caroline Pascoe
SSM



Associate Priest
To be appointed



LifeLink Chaplain
To be appointed



Mark Sanderson,
Warden

Lay and Ordained Ministers

Our rural dean and wardens have a depth of support to draw on in our SSM and local and visiting clergy, our readers, chaplains, and growing teams of lay ministers.



Caroline Pascoe
SSM



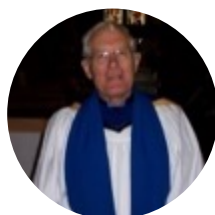
Colin Leggate
PTO



David Thomas
PTO



John Davies
PTO



Derek Glover
Reader



Freda Davies
Reader

Local Ministers

Ours was one of the first benefices in the diocese to form a collaborative Local Ministry Team in the 1990s and this has taken a range of forms over the years. Currently we have new teams of Lay Worship Leaders and also Pastoral Visitors. We are in the process of recruiting a team of Lay Missioners. Collaborative working is important for us in such busy parishes with such a strong mission and ministry agenda involving so many people



Benefice Administrator: Rachael Daniel

Benefice Safeguarding Officer: Judith Wiggins



Chaplaincy in the Ross Parishes

We have several voluntary chaplaincy roles in the Ross Parishes including Industrial and Retail Chaplaincy, Air and Sea Cadets, and the Royal British Legion. The LifeLink Chaplaincy post will be our first School and Young Peoples Chaplaincy role.



The Diocesan & Deanery Strategies and our goals

We are very encouraged by the direction of travel of the recently renewed diocesan and deanery strategies – and by how aligned we are with that in the Ross Parishes. We welcome the opportunity to work with the wider deanery and diocese to be resourced, to encourage others, and to learn and grow together.

The diocese is seeking to see the following list of features in each local church:

We are encouraged that we are making good progress with this checklist in Ross and in Walford through our 2020 Vision and Mission implementation and planning.

- ✓ A clear mission and purpose with missional and enabling leadership.
- ✓ Teams of lay and ordained ministers.
- ✓ Clergy and congregations who want to see growth and are willing to change and adapt.
- ✓ A clear path for all to grow in faith.
- ✓ A culture of welcome and good relationships.
- ✓ An all age missional worshipping community.
- ✓ Youth/Intergenerational mission in school, home, church and community settings.
- ✓ Young people involved in decision making and leadership.
- ✓ An engaging digital presence.
- ✓ Sustainable buildings and finances

“Our overarching aim as a diocese is to have 50 healthy and growing churches with a congregation of 50 people in rural areas or 100 in our market towns, with a minimum of 3% of the population attending a regular form of worship.”
Renewed Diocesan 2030 Strategy

Seven Bold Diocesan Outcomes by 2030

1. 3% of population (10,000 people) regularly attending worship in our churches

We know this is more challenging in Market Towns than villages but our goal is to grow and to see the age demographic of our congregations match more closely that of our town.

2. Many (at least 50) benefices with a congregation of 50 people

(100 in market towns). Walford All Age services used to nudge towards 50 – it is our ambition to rebuild to these levels. The Ross first Sunday All Age Eucharist has been creeping up and is hovering around 100.

3. Double the number (to 1000 in the diocese) of young people choosing to attend worship regularly. *Our LifeLink Project is a major first step for us towards this ambition.*

4. At least 200(+) self-supporting or lay leaders trained and commissioned.

5. 25 skilled, trained, paid youth church leaders.

6. 50 New Worshipping Communities (25 for children and young people, including FLOURISH Worshipping Communities). *It is our aim to see a new Fresh Expression in Ross – in St Mary’s or in school.*

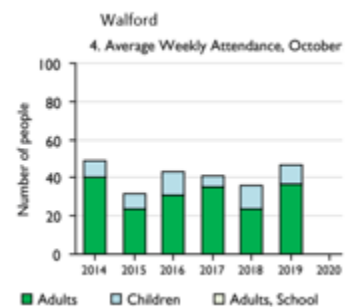
7. Equipped whole life disciples.

We are also very encouraged to see the following aspirations for benefices and deaneries in the strategy:

- Youth/Intergenerational Hubs connecting school, home and church, enabling young people to grow in faith and form worshipping communities – proposed that Ross and Abbeydore Deaneries will collaborate.
- At least one new youth-focussed worshipping community surrounded by a youth mission and discipleship vision and approach.
- Excellent Life Events ministry
- Training pathways for volunteers and local ordained leaders to enable young people to be at the heart of the church’s mission.
- Develop and expand our existing network of school chaplains.

www.hereford.anglican.org/

www.hereford.anglican.org/our-vision



The finances of both St Mary's and Walford Churches are in a healthy state.

For **St Michael's in Walford**, the operational costs are generally covered by the income, though this can fluctuate depending on the level of fundraising undertaken in any given year. The fundraising committee is active and has hosted harvest lunches, celebrations for royal events, flower festivals and open gardens. Stewardship has also proven successful for Walford, in the form of the Parish Giving Scheme and Gift Days. St Michael's is equally proud of its annual support of both mission and local charitable organisations.

Walford contributes generously to the Diocese and the PCC resolved to offer £10,640 in 2025.

For **St Mary's in Ross**, for a few years prior to, and including the Covid 19 pandemic, the outgoings of St Mary's exceeded income, however a Stewardship Campaign was launched in 2022. This resulted in a marked increase in giving including members signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme, since when we have not had to draw on reserves to cover running costs. Overall our reserves are very healthy.

An active fundraising group meets regularly and plans both small and large events. In 2023 over £20,000 was raised for the ministry of the church. Such events include Come and Sing services followed by supper which attract singers who join our own choir for worship. Regular coffee mornings take place on the first Saturday of each month and, as well as raising money, provide an important social opportunity for both church goers and townsfolk. The church is open every day and visitors make a reasonable contribution via donations at the door, both by cash and card.

St Mary's pays its Diocesan contribution in full and on time (St Mary's PCC has resolved to offer £76,800 in 2025).

In addition, the Friends of St Mary's holds regular fundraising events for the fabric of the church. It has been hugely successful in obtaining grants for projects, most recently the extension of our nave platform.

St Mary's PCC also recognises the importance of charitable giving and as well as special collections when disasters have struck, gives each year to a variety of charities, both in the UK and abroad.

As a closed church with a small congregation, not helped by the long closure of the village hall, **Brampton Abbots** holds a small reserve, used to maintain the churchyard. The PCC owns the adjacent car park.

With the building of new houses in the village and the reopening of café church in the village hall, we are working to rebuild the congregation and strengthen the finances of St Michaels and All Angels.

Together the offer across the benefice covers what is needed for a stipendiary rector and a benefice part time House for Duty priest based at Walford.

St Michael and All Angels Church, Walford

The Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels is one of the oldest churches in the diocese with parts dating back to about 1100AD. It is built on the site of a mud and wattle Celtic church.

In 2016 we carried out some reordering of the west end of the nave, raising the floor to provide better access, removing some of the pews and repositioning the Tudor font. This has given us a large communal area with modern Kitchen and toilet facilities. The new chairs and large stacking oak tables together with subtle LED lighting enable us to use this space for varied styles of worship and mean the church building is also more suitable to be used by groups in the community as well as other church activities.

The church is open every day during the daytime. The area attracts many visitors all the year round and quite a few people do visit the church, including many who come to tend the graves of loved ones in the churchyard.

There is also a church field used for parking for large services and events.

We often worship outside in the church grounds in the summer. The grounds are ideal for informal worship and for Forest Church style worship. We have also held camps for teens and for families in the grounds and Champing in the church itself. There is a great deal of scope for imagination in the grounds.



St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye

A common comment from visitors to St Mary's is that the church seems so welcoming and has the feel of a place that is well connected to and respected by the community. This is so satisfying for us and is very much where we want to be.

Like St Michael's Walford, a recent reordering project has transformed the inside space. Eight years ago we removed all the pews, replaced much of the flooring, added toilets, kitchen and children's spaces. We have also rethought the main entrance which is now fully accessible with glass doors providing a great welcome to the space. We've also relit the church (with functional and atmospheric lighting schemes) upgraded sound and AV systems. Most recently we've enlarged the "performance space" at the top of the nave, also creating a much better focus for nave based services. The result is a bright modern space within and embracing our superb Medieval building.

The church dates from the late thirteenth century, most of the current floor plan dates from this time. Two extensive and sensitive Victorian restorations pretty much left us with the building we use today. We have, as already mentioned, recently reworked that space with a truly imaginative reordering.

Our church buildings in Ross and Walford are emblematic of our approach to ministry. We embrace the best of what is traditional, repurpose, reorder and enhance it and offer it to and for our communities.

Across the churchyard is **St Mary's Hall**. Originally built as a school at the very beginning of the 19th century, this building is in use most days of the week, often by the church for meetings, but also by a number of community groups. There is a main hall and some first floor meeting rooms, some of these are let on a long term contracts to other organisations. The basement houses the CTRD Community Larder and storage space. St Mary's Hall is run by a trust under the governance of the PCC and is entirely self-financing.



Brampton Abbotts Church Building

St Michael and All Angels Church, Brampton Abbotts

The small village of Brampton Abbotts is just a few miles to the north of Ross-on-Wye. Although the church is now closed, a major restoration of the building has been undertaken recently. The church community has a PCC and worships six times a year in the church, in the nearby Village Hall and occasionally in the churchyard.

Brampton Abbotts church is now trying to re-establish itself as a community building.



Associate Priest (Part-time) Role Descriptor

For some years we have had valued House for Duty colleagues based at Walford and living in Walford Vicarage. Now with the benefice working more closely together we are offering this post as a Benefice Part Time House for Duty Associate Priest post.

The post is for 2.5 days per week plus Sundays.

Role Descriptor

Sharing in the leadership of the Ross Parishes' 2020 Vision to become "growing intergenerational, inclusive churches inspiring faith, hope and love" the postholder will in particular:

- Take a lead in proactively reaching out to the people, organisations and communities of Walford parish and the St Mary' Garden Village development
- Take a lead in re-growing the worshipping community at Walford Church including All Age worship
- Make the most of festivals and community celebrations/ events to connect school + church + homelife/community through the year to inspire faith, hope and love in people of all ages and backgrounds, working collaboratively with the Portfolio /LifeLink Hub Team
- Take a lead in inspiring faith, hope and love among young people, their families and staff in Walford School and work with the Children's, Young People's and Families Portfolio Lead and Schools Teams to develop schools ministry further across the primary schools of the benefice.
- Share in staffing and growing the missional Life Events Ministry of the benefice (Christenings, Weddings, Funerals as well as marking other significant events in the lives of local people and our communities.)
- Share in benefice Sunday ministry – including 3 Sunday mornings normally in Walford and one in Ross each month, plus other Sunday worship and events such as baptisms, Evensong, new Fresh Expressions, Grow Youth Group, as agreed

Associate Priest (Part-time) Person Specification

This post would especially suit someone with a heart for outreach in the community and for seeing faith growing in young people and families.

The post would be very suitable for someone looking to work part-time – alongside another part-time role, while completing research, or parenting for example – as well as those who have early or recently retired and are looking for an exciting next phase in life and ministry.

	Essential	Desirable
Is attracted to this benefice and to our vision and mission, and wants to see people of all ages find and grow in faith	✓	
Outward facing and missionally minded – proactive about getting out into the community and building community with church as a part of it	✓	
Experience and/or training in growing all age worshipping communities and working with schools; keen to link church + school + homelife creatively	✓	
Enjoys working collaboratively - in both leading and team playing roles	✓	
People orientated - a pastoral heart and who wants to get to know people well	✓	
Well organised (including being able to say no!) with good administrative and IT skills	✓	
Well-developed communication and inter-personal skills	✓	
Comfortable working in a mixed ecology and inclusive environment with us	✓	

Also	Essential	Desirable
Has a driving license and their own transport	✓	

The House

Available to candidates who wish House for Duty terms...

Walford Vicarage is next to the church and to the church field which is used for church car parking for major services and events.

The vicarage is a purpose designed 4 bedroomed house built in 1978.

The house has recently been redecorated throughout with the new flooring in upstairs rooms.

It offers spacious living area, 4 good size bedrooms. It is set back from the main road with a ample sized gated driveway with garage.

The vicarage has quite a large garden much of it laid to grass, but about a third of the plot is a small orchard with a variety of fruit trees which is currently a 'wild garden' area.

There is a pathway linking the Vicarage to the Church.

Behind the Vicarage is the old railway track embankment and one can see Goodrich Castle on the other side of the River Wye from the patio.



Our support for you, should you take this post

We have signed up to the Clergy Covenant (<https://rossparishes.uk/pcc>) and in so doing we have committed to support all members of our ministry team, to treat them with respect and to share the load.

We have a large ministry team between them they cover a number of responsibilities across the parishes. We also have active PCCs and teams supporting the three mission portfolios of Faith, Hope and Love and the LifeLink Chaplaincy Project.

Our congregations comprise a large and growing number of people who have a passion for the work of our churches and who are there to lend a hand. You will not be alone.

We will:

- Welcome you (and your family) with a friendly welcome
- Help you to create the best possible home for yourself (and your family)
- Encourage you to develop a realistic and healthy work life balance
- Encourage and support you in your own professional development
- Urge you to leave time for your family and then respect that time
- Not expect you to be present for everything we do
- Support and pray for you as you discern the best way forward for us