The Parishes of Stilton with Denton & Caldecote,
With Folksworth with Morborne & Haddon
and Elton

St Mary Magdalene, Stilton
St Helen’s, Folksworth
All Saints, Morborne
St Mary’s, Haddon
All Saints, Elton

ely2025

The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

2023
Foreword by the Bishop of Ely, Stephen Conway.

Thank you for taking an interest in this post in the Diocese of Ely. The role of Rector of Stilton with Denton & Caldecote, with Folksworth with Morborne & Haddon and Elton (held in plurality) is a significant post, caring for the people and growing the mission of these 5 parishes in the Deanery of Yaxley. We need the next incumbent to be committed to the Deanery and Diocesan mission objectives, as well as to the leadership of these parishes.

The Diocese of Ely is committed to renewing in Christ its mission and ministry. We have revitalised our Living Ely 2025 strategy in the post pandemic situation that we now inhabit. Fundamentally we are still committed to engage with our communities, deepen our faith & grow our churches. We have made major investments in mission to areas of new housing (some very close to these parishes) and in growing the church in market towns and cities (like Peterborough).

The next stage of Deanery planning will see us focus resources on growing younger congregations and reaching further beyond our existing congregations, especially in these areas of new housing. We will look to these parishes to continue to play the major role they have in the past as we engage with these challenges.

In the light of these mission priorities, we need clergy who are:

- Confident in God - rooted in prayer and scripture.
- Committed to personal holiness and striving for professional excellence.
- Adventurous and visionary, willing to see the church through the eyes of those who do not attend.
- Mission-focused leaders who want to see the church deeply engaged with schools, serving the community and connecting with community organisations of all kinds.
- Resilient people who take risks, accept failure and try again.
- Empowering and enabling collaborative ministry.
- Hospitable and generous when engaging with the local community
- Open and willing to work with and learn from others.

As a diocese we offer:

- Clear, enabling diocesan leadership
- Modern, well-maintained houses
- Consistent, sustained investment in lay ministries
- A diocesan culture of generosity with serious investment in clergy wellbeing
- Excellent Continuing Ministerial Development
- Robust diocesan finances, which can sustain posts that are based in deprived communities.

Enquiries about this post can be made to the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, Ven Richard Harlow, on 07415757527 or archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org
Welcome letter from the church wardens

The Stilton Group are a family of five Churches; each Church has its own personality, but all share a strong sense of Christian love and community and a keen desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ. We are a friendly and welcoming group seeking a leader who possesses deep faith and clarity of vision, to enable our Churches to grow and reach their full potential.

This is a hugely exciting opportunity with incredible scope to make a real difference. We have a variety of services that take place each week across the group from traditional to contemporary and somewhere in between. So, this opportunity would suit someone who enjoys leading a mixture of service types and can adapt to varying congregational needs and take advantage of the many possible avenues to grow our numbers.

Five Churches may sound daunting; however, our congregations are blessed with several qualified individuals who support and lead services, including 3 licensed lay ministers and an authorised lay minister. This post also comes with the benefit of a paid Administrator to take away much of the admin load, freeing up time for the incumbent to focus on mission.

Stilton is a lovely, historic village to reside in with several amenities and easy access to the A1. The Rectory is spacious and in excellent condition, well above the national standard of provision.

We are looking for someone who engages deeply with God and his teachings through the Bible. The successful applicant will have a passion for outreach, be willing to build relationships with the wider community and have a firm commitment to pastoral care - an individual who is enthusiastic, visionary, relational and approachable. We wholeheartedly concur with the description of the clergy included in the foreward written by Bishop Stephen.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you be interested in having an exploratory conversation or would be interested in arranging a visit prior to officially applying. We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and answer any questions you may have.

Mark Holman

(on behalf of Church Wardens)
Please feel free to contact any of the church wardens listed below

**Stilton** Marion Hodson (01733 241875) marionhodson@hotmail.co.uk

**Elton** Mark Holman (01832 280720 Mark@matherholman.co.uk

**Folksworth** John Blackman (01733 240349) johnblackman@promit.fsnet.co.uk

**Haddon** Angelique Wisse (01733 229000) angeliquewisse@hotmail.com
Chrissie RobertsLewis (01733 247703) vimhyims@gmail.com

**Morborne** Pam Dow (01733 242227) pameladow@btinternet.com
Nikki Blythe (07967334474) nblythe76@hotmail.co.uk

**Administrator Contact:** stiltongroupofchurches@gmail.com

You are also welcome to contact Ven Richard Harlow (Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech) for further advice and support regarding this appointment.

archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org (Tel: 07415 757527)
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Where we are.

The five parishes which make up the Stilton group are Stilton (with Caldecote and Denton); Folksworth, Morborne, Haddon and Elton. We are located approximately 6 miles to the south and west of the city of Peterborough and 75 miles north of London adjacent to the A1 motorway. All of the villages have excellent transport links north or south using the A1 (junctions 16/17); east and west with easy access to the A14 and A47 and good train services from Peterborough (50 minutes to London Kings Cross). Although geographically much closer to Peterborough we form part of the Deanery of Yaxley within the Diocese of Ely.

Peterborough can be reached in approximately 15 minutes by car. Also in close proximity are the lovely market towns of Stamford and Oundle, with an excellent selection of shops and other facilities. The cities of Cambridge and Ely are approximately 40 minutes away by car.

Our parishes lie on the western edge of the area known as the Fens where the landscape is predominantly flat but broken up with a number of low hills. We are an excellent base for walking and cycling activities.

Each of our villages is a very welcoming community with a high proportion of people choosing to stay within the villages when moving house. Stilton and Elton have a mixture of pubs, restaurants, shops and small local businesses. Stilton has the largest population with about 2,700 people, though this is soon to increase to 3,000 or so with new estates currently under construction. Folksworth has 900 residents; Elton has just over 700 people; Morborne and Haddon together total fewer than 150 people. Historically, much of the employment was in agriculture, but now most local employment is limited to the facilities mentioned above and the parishes are now largely commuter villages for those working in the local towns with some travelling to London and further afield.
These hardy souls are seen taking part in our annual parish pilgrimage, where the route takes in a visit to each of our churches and covers a distance of approximately 10 miles.

Our mission statement

The Mission Statement for our group of churches is:

“Growing together in Worship – Reaching out with Christian Love”

which reflects the desire across all of our churches to work together to create a Christian community that is part of the life of each of our villages whilst also recognising that we are part of a much wider Christian community and that we are all called to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

We are fortunate in having PCCs and electoral roll members with many gifts that they willingly share for the good of the parish. Their gifts allow them to perform duties such as financial administration, building maintenance and fund raising. However the incumbent plays a key role in coordinating these roles and ensuring we make the best use of the varied skills of members, and engaging them in mission or pastoral care activities is an area which could be further developed.

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Our styles and patterns of worship

Our churches offer a variety of styles of worship from relatively traditional, (including occasional recourse to the Book of Common Prayer); to the use of Common Worship materials (which are used most frequently across the group) to more modern forms including café style worship, family services, messy praise and an ‘Inspire’ service which follows a ‘Fresh Expressions’ approach. All Saints, Elton (the last church to join the group) has traditionally offered a more formal service pattern and would wish to be allowed to continue to do so.

Worship is our highest priority. There is a real desire in all of our churches to participate in worship that enhances our relationship with God. This is always reflected in our Growth Plans.

There is a willingness to work together in worship too. It is not unusual for services to have shared leadership and those who participate are given encouragement not just from the leadership but the congregation as well. This provides the right environment for people to know that playing their part will be greatly appreciated.

Across the Group we are blessed with a variety of styles of worship which have come about through congregations and leadership who encourage a pioneering spirit and a willingness to try different things. It is not unusual to have a Sunday with a parish communion in one parish, then a Messy praise service in another and a BCP Evening Prayer in a third to finish.

The Stilton Group is well served with worship leaders. We are fortunate to currently have three LLMs, one ALM and a number of others who have a gift for worship leading who support them working across our parishes. We also have a number of retired clergy who offer us help as required and during the vacancy we have been very blessed to receive support from local stipendiary clergy. Every parish has at least one musician and we rarely resort to using MP3s or CDs, however we do have the facilities to do so in all of our churches where necessary or appropriate.

As well as Sunday worship, we have three midweek communion services per month in the Group and we also lead collective worship in our three schools. The pattern for this with our previous Incumbent was that he led worship approximately once a fortnight in each school, supported by other lay members of the congregation.

There have also been a number of fresh expressions of church over the years including Messy Church, Pub Church and the recently started after school group Lego Church, each of which have increased our reach into the community. Festival services in rural communities are also great opportunities to welcome a wider group of attendees and these have been flourishing in recent years.
The current service pattern across our churches is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Folksworth</th>
<th>Stilton</th>
<th>Elton</th>
<th>Haddon</th>
<th>Morborne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Folkus</td>
<td>Morning Praise</td>
<td>Holy Communion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>Family Praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning Praise</td>
<td>Holy Communion</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy Communion</td>
<td>‘Inspire’ service</td>
<td>Holy Communion</td>
<td>Messy Praise</td>
<td>EP or HC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning Praise</td>
<td>Café style worship</td>
<td>Morning Praise</td>
<td>Holy Communion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.30 Group Service (on a rotation basis)</td>
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**Our churches**

**All Saints Church, Elton**

All Saints’ Church Elton is in an attractive rural setting at the top of the village overlooking the Nene Valley.

The church was built mainly in the C14th with a tower added around 1500, with further restorations in the C19th. It can seat in excess of 300 persons, has a good organ and oil-fired central heating.

Support has been forthcoming from the Village for projects including New Roofing, excellent new lighting, a sound system, restoration of the...
superb Victorian Stained-glass windows, DDA enabled access via the West Porch and new railings and stairs at the main entrance. These projects have all been able to proceed without impact on the church’s Parish Share.

The latest project has been to bring the two Saxon Crosses from the churchyard (where they were placed in Victorian times) back inside the Church. Money for this work has been raised from events held in the church and well supported by the village.

Some money has been raised towards a reordering project involving the provision of toilets and a new servery although further fundraising will be needed to enable this to go ahead.

The last Quinquennial Review did not identify any major issues.

All Saints’ Church, Morborne

Morborne church is small but very attractive in its rural setting. The Church is most striking for the beautiful roofs of Collyweston slates and the dominant brick tower dating to the 16th century. It is the only wholly brick tower in the county. The interior gives a rare impression of the lighting of a church before electricity as the 19th century brass oil lamps remain in situ.

The earliest fabric is found in the chancel arch dated c1140. The north and south doors are from c1190. Most of the church dates from the 13th Century. There is a wall painting on the jamb of the North Chancel window, depicting St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ. In the South aisle there is an eroded effigy of a priest in mass vestments with a Y-shaped orphrey, resting his feet on two human heads. This was found under the tower in 1900 when some underpinning work was carried out. The two bells which previously hung in the tower have been taken down and are now stored on the floor of the vestry and are dated 1614 and 1712.

Services in this church are held on one Sunday each month and have their own unique atmosphere (including the issuing of hot water bottles in winter)!

There is a current fundraising drive to address some issues with the roof and some remedial work is currently underway.
St Mary Magdalene, Stilton

Parts of the church date back to the 13th century but the majority of the current fabric dates from the 15th century and then rebuilt/repaired in the 19th and 20th centuries. More recent enhancements include a Church Meeting Room, sympathetically added to the side of the church in 1993, which as well as offering a modern space for a range of church activities and toilet facilities, is available to be used by other village groups and organisations and therefore provides an additional income stream for the church. In 2019 we installed a state of the art AV system in the church which enables much more diverse forms of music and video to be played.

The fabric is in good shape and there are currently no significant issues. A collyweston slate roof was completely replaced on the south side of the church in 2022, thanks in large part to donations from local businesses which meant the work did not impinge on the church’s ability to contribute its parish share. The current project being pursued by the PCC is to replace the pews in the church with an appropriate chair arrangement to offer more flexibility in how the space can be used. A faculty for this project has been approved.
St. Helen’s Church in Morborne Road, was first built in 1150 AD. The church was restored in 1850 when the chancel was entirely rebuilt and the vestry added, the north wall of the nave largely rebuilt, and a bellcote built on the west gable.

Further work was carried out particularly between 1982 and 1987. The pews in the front half of the church were removed and replaced with oak ones from the redundant Church at Caldecote. The replacement pews were then fitted to a new floor.

Additionally, the collyweston Roof which was in a very poor state was replaced with 23,000 reclaimed tiles. All the work was carried out by Church members and other willing volunteers.

Internally further work was completed including a complete redecoration and staining of the internal roof timbers. New carpets and curtains were fitted in 1987. More recently a modern AV system has also been installed.

In 2023 redecoration of the interior including replastering parts of the Nave and replacing the carpets and curtains is planned.
St Mary’s church is located in a rural setting in the small attractive village of Haddon set in peaceful grounds. The church is light and airy, and on clear mornings the interior is bathed in sunlight.

The church has been added to by the generations who have worshipped here. A church on this location was first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Part of the eastern wall of the nave is believed to date back to that period. Other parts of the church, such as the chancel arch, dates from the 12th century and the south aisles were added during the 13th century. Around the 16th Century the square and battlemented tower was added with three bells. Further restoration and rebuilding took place in 1897 and 1901.

The interior of the church is dominated by the beautiful 12th century chancel arch, leading to the simple and peaceful chancel. A large centrally placed stained glass window depicts the image of Christ crucified, with the Virgin Mary below with the infant Jesus on her lap. To either side are St Michael and St George. It is in memory of Lieutenant Cornwallis Jasper Trower, R.N., killed at the battle of Majuba Hill, in February 1881.

Services at Haddon are lively and fun. The congregation in Haddon welcomes everyone, and has been growing, bringing in many from outside the village. The church is permanently open to the public - a place for quiet prayer and reflection, valued by many visitors. This was particularly important during the lock-downs.

Haddon is a generous congregation, and we support local and national charities whenever we can, including the Light Project, Peterborough, the Annabel Davies Centre and the Little Princess Trust to name a few.

Over the past year we have replaced the woodworm infested chairs with a more comfortable style of chair. Future projects include the provision of a toilet and to add a servery that is in keeping with the interior of the church. However, fundraising is needed to finance the projects.

In the words of a Vision for The Church by a French Bishop:-

"A Church. where the Holy Spirit will feel at home because everything hasn't been foreseen, settled and decided in advance. An open Church. A Church where the audacity to do something new will be stronger than the habit of doing things as they have always been done".
Church Leadership

Each of our churches has its own PCC. These meet with varying frequency depending on need, but normally no more frequently than once every two months. In addition, the church wardens of the five churches form an additional committee that meets to discuss wider issues across the group. There are no standing committees in any parishes. Instead, there have been informal meetings of Incumbent and wardens as required to plan for meetings and attend to day-to-day ministry and worship.

Considering the size of some of our parishes, the levels of local lay leadership are very good and all parishes operate effectively.

There is a balance kept between decisions made by the warden’s group and decisions made by the individual PCCs. We have worked to improve our communication between the two and there is a general appreciation of the benefits of some decisions being taken by the wardens on behalf of their PCCs.

Whilst Covid did disrupt the normal operation of our Parish Growth Plans, we have a history of identifying our main intentions for growth based on five themes: Worship, Prayer, Discipleship, Community and Mission.

Yaxley Deanery has an excellent Clergy Chapter chaired by our Rural Dean Revd Canon Sarah Gower. This has proven to be an invaluable place of fellowship and support especially through the pandemic.
The ministry team support the work of the incumbent minister by leading worship across the group on a regular basis and offering their services in other ways as required, such as with home visits or work with our schools.

Currently Claire offers invaluable support to Folksworth School and Pat Maltman with Stilton School (as well as ensuring that Messy Praise continues during the vacancy).

We also have the benefit of at least two retired clergy living in, and with permission to officiate around, our parishes.
The Stilton Group takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and has worked hard over the last seven years to make sure its policies are up to date and publicised; that our PCC members are covered by current DBS paperwork and have the necessary training to match. Across five parishes this has been a major task and a magnificent contribution from our administrator to keep up with both the volume of work and changes to requirements.

Of course, we have been especially concerned with health and safety in recent years. For the most part, we are now operating 'normally'. At communion we are continuing to offer dipped wafers with no local pressure to go back to a shared cup.

GDPR is always on our PCC agendas and all members are aware of their responsibilities.

Working as a family of churches

The Stilton Group was first formed about 35 years ago. At this point, it was made up of all constituent parishes except Elton, who joined in 2012. Whilst each parish is unique and has a unique calling, we are also able to work together to achieve what we couldn't, and wouldn't want to do, alone.

Together we have employed an administrator. We also united to deliver an Alpha course in 2019 which included over 40 attendees. We have in recent years had the services of a funded curate and made decisions together such as differing our service times to enable the Incumbent to travel with ease from one service to the next.

Our wardens meetings enable communication to take place more effectively as one message can be given out at a single meeting and decisions can be made that would take an age to do separately. We have not found it necessary or more efficient to combine PCCs or bank accounts, but the meeting of wardens enables us to do many things much better. Each Parish does, however, contribute to a ‘Group Account’ to fund items common to the group, e.g. the Link magazine and the incumbents expenses; also to pay the Administrators wages.

We have also found that many events work best when we have a single event across the Group. Examples are our festival services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. We have a parish pilgrimage where walkers travel from one end of the Group to the other visiting all churches along the way. Lent Reflections is a well attended spiritual journey leading up to Easter.
In months where there is a ‘fifth’ Sunday, we offer one service across the group – taking it in turns to host and provide refreshments. This may be an opportunity for inviting guest speakers from charities we support or the diocese. For example, in April 2023 this service was led by our Archdeacon.

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### Pastoral Care

The group see pastoral care as a key element of the role of the Incumbent and the church as a whole.

The Incumbent has normally concentrated on high priority visits - hospitals, people in times of crisis, new arrivals, occasional offices and the like.

With support from the lay ministers as required, home communions have been offered once a month to those who have a need for this service.

Supporting each other is a key element of discipleship for all Christians and there are excellent examples of church members supporting others in our communities across the group on a regular basis.

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### Clergy Accommodation

#### Living in Stilton

There are two Diocese-owned properties in the Stilton Group. The Incumbent resides next to the church in Stilton, but there is also a Rectory on Green Hill Road in Elton which was the home for our curate from 2019-2022.

Stilton, and the other villages in the group provide a wonderful place to live. The area benefits from beautiful rolling hills, ancient villages that are full of history and any number of peaceful walks to explore.

We are well served with good communication links though it would be difficult to work here without a car as public transport from Stilton is limited.

Stilton village is well served with amenities. There is a primary school in the village which performed very well in a recent OFSTED inspection. Secondary and Further education can be reached by bus from the village. The village has an excellent store
(including a Post Office and banking facilities), chiropodists, pharmacy, hairdressers, pubs, hotel and an Indian restaurant. The Stilton Pavilion is home to a number of clubs including football as well as hosting a range of social events. Many ‘home’ run businesses flourish (e.g. gardeners), the SCAN magazine is a good source of information.

**The Rectory**

The Rectory in Stilton is of the highest standard for a clergy home;

- Very well appointed, and probably well above the average national standard of provision.
- Meets requirements for the layout of a rectory, with a separate and generous office and meeting space with access to a separate toilet.
- Easy to heat throughout with zoned gas central heating and individual radiator thermostats.
- Underwent a complete refurbishment about 12 years ago. Kept in very good condition which combines both elegant fittings and modern practicality.
- Large, secluded and low maintenance garden which offers both a quiet place to relax as well as a large enough lawn to host village events.
- Generous parking for 4-5 cars.
- Four double bedrooms including one en-suite and all with generous built in storage.
- Large single garage and utility room.
- The Housing Officer at Ely Diocese works hard to make sure clergy homes are in good working order. Any repairs needed are dealt with quickly.
Please note that there is a second Rectory in Elton which has, in recent years, been used to accommodate a curate and is currently being rented out.

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**Working with our young people**

We have three church primary schools within our parishes comprising Stilton Primary Academy (Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust) and Folksworth (Voluntary Controlled) Primary and in Elton (Voluntary Aided) Primary. All three are currently rated as ‘good’ by Ofsted. The incumbent and other members of the church community contribute fully to the work of these schools through involvement in collective acts of worship; representing the church on governing bodies and in other ways. The outgoing incumbent chose not to sit on the governing bodies of these schools though the church
still maintains a strong representation at all meetings. Relationships between the churches and the schools are excellent, with children frequently welcomed to the churches for acts of worship or other activities.

Children from our communities go on to attend a number of local secondary schools. The majority from Stilton and Folksworth attend Sawtry Village Academy. From Elton and our other villages, the designated school is Nene Park Academy in Peterborough. Again, both are rated ‘good’ by Ofsted. From all of our parishes a number of students will also attend Kings School, Peterborough, the cathedral school. This school is recognised as one of the best performing state schools in East Anglia. **Forging improved links with these schools, in particularly the secondary schools, and our young people who attend them is an area we would like to develop further in the coming years.**

Our churches also engage with our younger people through a range of other activities including occasional Parade services; a monthly ‘Messy Praise’ service in one of our churches; recent experiments with ‘Lego church’ and a group involving year 6 students at one of our primary schools called ‘Crossover’ which has operated in the past but not been reestablished since covid. At least one of our services each week has a family or child friendly focus.

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**Occasional offices**

Our churches continue to benefit from a strong connection with our communities in terms of occasional offices. Each year, we host or lead approximately 20-25 funerals, 4-7 weddings and a similar number of baptisms, though this number was higher pre-Covid. Confirmation services happen according to need and normally in coordination with other churches in the Yaxley Deanery.

In support of these events, we host annual 'Services of Light' services at Stilton and Elton when we invite those whom we have helped through bereavement. These are greatly appreciated and have a high attendance.

We invite our marriage couples to attend a three session marriage preparation course, normally hosted in the winter months. This is a great opportunity for couples to get to know members of the congregation.

Four of our churches have open churchyards that we manage but the Stilton churchyard has been close for many years, being replaced by a cemetery which has been managed by the parish council for many years. All churchyards are kept in very good order.
Our baptismal ministry has enabled us to get to know families who, in time, have often attended our family-oriented services. At the baptism service, we give the children and parents Bibles as gifts.

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Discipleship

Discipleship is an important thread in the life of our churches and is expressed and explored in many different ways.

Whilst benefitting from the ministry of our curate, we introduced theme based preaching on Sundays. This was supported by excellent and accessible Bible notes to encourage greater reflection on Sunday teaching.

According to the availability of leadership, we have had a number of different groups meeting midweek in the last few years; 'Round the Farmer's Table, Linking Hands, The Men's Prayer Breakfast, Beta, the Group wide event known as Lent Reflections and Inspire Midweek have all made a difference to our spiritual journey at different times in recent years.

We have offered formal training in the leading of intercessions and now have a good array of people capable and confident in leading worship in this way. It is normal practice for the Bible to be read according to a rota of readers in most churches. We have, in the past, hosted the Diocese wide written course called 'Growing as a Disciple, which is part of the Authorised Lay Ministry programme.

Our Growth Plans have regularly included reference to the need to increase the number of trained and authorised lay ministers. We have been very pleased therefore, to have two members of our congregation become Licensed Lay Minister in the last four years. Others have attended the Occasional Preacher's Course as well. Collaborative ministry has been encouraged and is flourishing across the Group.

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Online Presence and Communication

Our online presence has been growing over the years to meet the needs of modern life. Facebook has been a means of communication for some years. The group as a whole has a page that has been used for the last seven years. (Stilton Group of
Churches). We also have a whatsapp group to keep families informed of our especially family friendly services and events.

Our website (stiltonchurches.com) has been in existence for many years. As of January 2023 it is under reconstruction although the early arrival of our administrator's baby has slowed progress with the planned update!

As with many churches, we started two youtube channels when Covid struck (Stilton Churches and Stilton Churches Kids). This was used extensively and they now have, between them, hundreds of videos covering school worship, Sunday worship, festivals, Bible study and many more. The effort of posting has meant we have largely moved back to concentrating on face-to-face ministry, but the channels are there to be populated again if required.

From a more traditional point of view, we send out a monthly newsletter, the LINK, to all homes in our Group. It includes a list of monthly services as well as invitations to special events and other items of interest. There is also a community magazine called Scan which is delivered to everyone in Stilton, Folksworth and Morborne. We include articles here too and are very much encouraged to contribute material regularly to keep us in contact with our local community as a whole.

Administrator role

When our previous Incumbent arrived in 2016, we agreed to provide additional administrative support. The appointment was initially part funded by the Diocese and enabled us to create a post offering 15 hours a week during the school term (36 weeks pa).

This investment has enabled us to support our ministry by taking a great deal of the administrative burden from our clergy. The role includes (but is not limited to) improving our online presence, acting as a Group safeguarding officer, creating posters and noticeboard items, collating submissions for the Link and Scan magazines, agendas and notes for meetings, creating worship rotas and completing faculty and funding applications for major projects which has included successfully obtaining grants totalling £40,000+ for the recently replaced Stilton Church collyweston roof.

Whenever there is a need, the administrator has helped to shift both work and responsibility from the Incumbent and parish teams as well as enable us to work to a much higher standard in many ways. The cost of this post is about £6,000 per year and is funded through the Stilton Group account.
We have recently been very fortunate in obtaining a very able volunteer to cover for our administrator’s maternity leave enabling the same level of support to be continued but we are due to welcome our administrator back in mid 2023.

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## Church finances

Although, like most churches, the Covid period did put pressure on the finances of most of our churches, the good news is that they are recovering quite well post covid and our PCCs and treasurers have worked really hard to ensure that we are all paying our way.

The group (through Parish/Ministerial share plus Parochial Fees) fully covers the direct cost of our Incumbent (i.e., Stipend, Pension, Housing, NIC and Council Tax).

Over the period of the last Incumbent the Parish Share paid by the Stilton Group increased by 35% against a request by The Diocese for 15%. In 2022 the Stilton Group contributed £51,520 towards the £48,600 direct cost of Clergy. This meant that £3,000 was given to the Diocese against their supported costs.

Overall figures across the group in 2022 show income was approximately £116,000 and expenditure £136,000. However, the difference was planned spending from reserves on significant capital expenditures such as replacing the lighting in Elton Church. Our churches have also been able to fund the essential repairs and maintenance in all of our churches.

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## Church music

A wide variety of musical input is included in our services. Our churches are well supported by accomplished organists as well as service leaders able to contribute vocally and with keyboard and guitar skills. We also have excellent AV systems in most of our churches which enable us to use recorded video or music items where it is appropriate for the service being attended.

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Appendix 1 – Person Specification

ROLE DESCRIPTION

This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the vision, aims and priorities set out in this profile. The role is for a priest who will lead, support and nurture the inhabitants of these parishes and build on recent achievements to develop the mission of the Church in these communities and ensure pastoral needs are met.

In particular, you will need to:

Leadership
- undertake all the tasks and responsibilities assigned to you by Canon Law and adhere to the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.
- guide, and work collaboratively with, church wardens, PCCs and the lay ministry team to provide regular and appropriate worship opportunities across our parishes.
- attend Chapter & Deanery Synod, and will be encouraged to assume some additional responsibility within the Deanery or Diocese.

Worship & nurture
- help us grow the numbers of regular worshippers and the depth of discipleship
- help us to meet the challenges of developing our offering in line with the vision of the Ely2025 strategy published by Ely diocese.

Mission
- be visible in and amongst our local communities
- engage enthusiastically with the schools within our group.
- be eager to develop further our work with families and young people.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking an experienced leader who will carry significant oversight and strategic development responsibilities. We will shortlist applicants against these criteria.

Spirituality
- Follows an ordered personal, spiritual life of daily prayer and Bible study and shares the fruits of their own discipleship with others.
- Is resilient, kind, bold, humble and hard working but can balance time for recreation and with family and friends with the demands of parish life.
- Seeks to follow the model given us by Jesus Christ of active ministry and time out for reflection and prayer in quiet days and retreats.

Worship and Preaching
- Has a passion for the Bible, able to communicate, teach and inspire others to growspiritually by showing them how to apply the Bible to modern life
- Is comfortable leading and participating in the current diversity of our parish services, and will enrich them.
• Is a priest with the ability to engage with the regular village congregations, also having the energy to reach out beyond those congregations and make the church attractive to others.
• Supports and encourages the ministry of lay people in preaching & leading services.

Leadership and Collaboration
• Is a servant leader and proven team player, committed to working collaboratively, and can lead or be a team member. An effective delegator and decision maker, able to manage their workload and capable under pressure.
• a leader who is prayerful, servant hearted and compassionate and who has the discernment to help the churches share the vision and direction that God is calling us to take.
• has the ability to embrace and grow a culture of acceptance and welcome, allowing people the space to experience God in their own way.
• Is at ease with the wider role in the community which is required of a rural Rector.

Discipleship, Learning and Nurture
• Will actively encourage the re-emergence of home groups post covid and eagerly support individuals in developing their discipleship.
• Is prepared to lead or co-lead discipleship and nurture courses as required.

Evangelism and engagement with social justice
• Is proactive and persuasive in sharing their faith with others and can enable others to gain confidence to do the same.
• Understands the imperative and breadth of parish outreach and mission, and will work and encourage others in mission and outreach activities.

Pastoral Care
• Has a genuine aptitude and a passion for pastoral care
• Is approachable and sensitive to the varied pastoral needs of our church family and wider community and willing to share pastoral care with our lay ministry team.

Stewardship and Parish Organisation
• Exhibits and proactively encourages generosity in the discipleship of church members, in the giving of their time, talents and money.
• Brings and displays the proven ability to plan, organise, manage and chair meetings and communicate effectively with the clergy team, Churchwardens and Parish Office.
• Has experience leading and managing administrative staff, and is committed to fairness and equality in the workplace.

Ecumenism and Links with other bodies
• Is committed to working with other local churches and encouraging others to do so.
• Actively offers support to local Christian charities and outreach groups.
• Plays an active part in Deanery (through chapter and synod) and Diocesan life.

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Appendix 2 – Current Growth Plan (22/23)

We will grow in...

**Worship**  Our enthusiasm to give God praise for who He is and what He has done.

**Prayer**  The ongoing conversation with God that guides, comforts and expresses our thoughts and feelings to Him and His to us.

**Discipleship**  The motivation and means by which we draw closer to imitating the life of Jesus.

**Community**  How a diverse group of people lives together in harmony and demonstrates love to one another.

**Mission**  How Christians show and tell the good news of Jesus in their community and beyond.

To enable the Group of Churches to grow, we will seek to achieve the following by July 2023;

**Worship**
- Support and welcome our new Licensed Lay Ministers and school worship contributors.
- Explore the possibility of adding an Authorised Lay Minister to our team.
- Broaden the number of contributors to public worship.
- Build teams to enable the delivery of Messy Praise.

**Prayer**
- Host 6 half nights of prayer in the calendar year.
- Host intercessions training to increase the number of confident worship leaders.

**Discipleship**
- Host Marriage Preparation in the spring of 2023.

**Community**
- Complete or commission all major building projects that are live in September 2022. This includes Stilton and Morborne roof repairs and relocating the Elton Celtic Crosses.
- To visit houses in new housing developments as people move in.
- Appoint at least 2 new foundation governors at Elton School.
Mission

- Create a response to the Cost of Living Crisis including supporting local foodbanks, considering creating warm spaces and connecting with Christians Against Poverty to provide teaching support on living on low incomes.
- Use our existing connections to invite families to Messy Praise and Family Folkus.
- Trial a new congregation at Folksworth School based around creative play.
Appendix 3 Sample LINK magazine

Services in April — All Welcome

**STILTON**
Church in 574 Sho
11.15 am Morning Praise
9th April 11.15 am Easter Communion
16th April 11.30 am Inspire
22nd April 11.30 am Cafe Church

**ELTON**
Oxord Rd 94
2nd April 9.30 am Holy Communion
9th April 9.30 am Easter Communion
16th April 9.30 am Holy Communion
23rd April 9.30 am Morning Praise

**MORBORNE**
The Green P57 3TG
9th April 3.00pm Easter Sunday Service with Holy Communion
16th April 3.00pm Evening Prayer

**MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION**
1st Wednesday of the month (9th April) @ Stilton 12.30pm with soup lunch.
2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month (12th and 26th April) @ Elton 10am Holy Communion followed by coffee.

**FOLKSWORTH**
Mellow Road P57 3LG
2nd April 9.45am Family Fellowship
9th April 9.45am Easter Communion
16th April 9.45am Holy Communion
23rd April 9.45am Morning Praise

**HADDON**
Haddon P57 31V
2nd April 6pm Evening Prayer
9th April 11.15 am Easter Communion
16th April 11.15 am Morning Praise
23rd April 11.15 am Holy Communion
30th April 10.30 am Group Service

EASTER STORY

“...they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him shouting, “Hosanna, Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” (John 12:13).”

Yet just a few days later the celebrations had changed to cries for Jesus to be crucified. Joy had turned to anger and sadness as Jesus Christ was raised high on the cross.

But the good news is that this was not the end but a new beginning. The Easter story is key to our understanding of Jesus as the Saviour promised to us in the Old Testament and through whom God fulfills the promises he has made to every one of us.

This is an understanding which has sustained Christians for hundreds of years and still does today. As Jesus promised his disciples when he revealed himself to them after the resurrection, he also promises us...

“...I will be with you always to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20).

In tough times that it is a promise truly to be celebrated.

*Nigel*
We have received the following lovely letter from Richard Gibb:

Dear Friends,

The festive activity of our first few days has just started to subside and there is time to let you know how we are getting on. Perhaps the best way to do this would be to letter pages out of my switchboard mailing and answer some frequently asked questions:

How was the meal? Very smooth thank you. The remnant from our guests and we arrived efficiently and quickly in turn. Perhaps the best move we have made. The only thing we are not sure about is the use of the rest room for our guests. We are very pleased with it.

How is the house? We are very pleased with it. We are all arriving most calming, and relaxing at the house.

Are they more friendly up north? When we visited the dog we've found 50% say hello waving, 25% either ignore you or pretend to talk to their own friends or on another way. We have found it very pleasant. This is much better since we've marketed our house.

How are the new looks? We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house. We've been asked whether we've altered the house, but it is not the same. We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house.

Oh and the new look! We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house. We've been asked whether we've altered the house, but it is not the same. We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house.

Oh and the new look! We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house. We've been asked whether we've altered the house, but it is not the same. We are looking forward to a new and improved version of the house.

While church are you going to? John Goff in Ironbridge.

I think we have the best of what the village has to offer.

Thank you for your generosity. We have received lovely cards and letters from our guests. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

With love and prayers

Richard and Sue