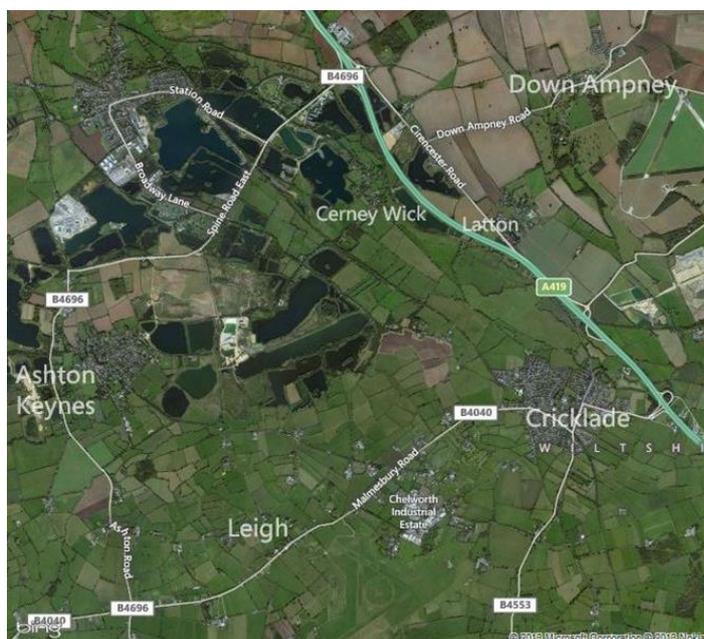


The Upper Thames Group Benefice Profile

1. The Upper Thames Group Benefice

Setting the Scene

We are a friendly group of four parishes making up the Upper Thames Group Benefice (UTGB), coming together in 2007. We include a small town Cricklade (St Sampson's), a largish village, Ashton Keynes (Holy Cross) and two small villages, Latton (St John the Baptist) and Leigh (All Saints). All four churches are within four miles of each other and cover some 15 square miles, encompassing areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty while being within easy reach of Swindon, Cirencester, Cheltenham, the M4 for London and Bristol and the M5 for the West Country or Birmingham, with easy access to rail and bus services.



In November 2012, our then vicar retired after seven years in the role. A new vicar was appointed in August 2014. Unfortunately, this incumbent suffered significant periods of ill health absence during which the Parish and staff team worked together well to provide ministerial cover. In August 2019 a separate matter led to the suspension of the incumbent and his resignation in March 2020.

Whilst the years of disruption and uncertainty have been incredibly challenging for the UTGB, they forged an ever-stronger bond among the four parishes. The new Priest in Charge will find capable and enthusiastic people who have developed a new spirit of unity, who are ready for change and growth, and eager for the Benefice to reach its full potential. The new incumbent can rest assured they will not only find a warm welcome but also plenty of support in their post.

The Benefice's strengths are

- Solid teams working across the Benefice and with our communities
- Strong desire to define our direction and take mission forward
- Many talented people
- A resilient and cohesive team looking for a leader
- A willingness to move forward

traditional and contemporary and not always in church) across Cricklade, Ashton Keynes and Latton, with additional worship in Leigh at festivals. Some of the ministry team focus on one church; others share in the life of all churches.

Supporting the ministry team there is an Upper Thames Group parish administrator, whose work base is usually the Benefice Office, housed in the Jenner Hall in Cricklade.

B. Connecting with God

Worship

Where worship is held regularly, there is a variety of different styles and a balance between traditional and more contemporary. As well as Sundays, there are some midweek worship opportunities to nurture and enhance people's connection with God. (See service pattern page 19)

<p>St Sampson's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ecumenical prayer weekends ❖ Sung evensong led by the choir ❖ Visits from St Sampson's C of E Primary School have covered a diverse range of topics from Pentecost to baptism 	<p>Holy Cross</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Small mainly congregation some are resistant to change. ❖ Growing group of younger village families who are willing to participate in less traditional forms of worship e.g. school assemblies, Messy Church, quiet Compline. ❖ Apart from well attended Festivals, bringing generations together it is a challenge. Adhoc 'Vintage' Messy Church does bring the different generations of the community together.
<p>St John the Baptist Benefice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Contemporary and traditional services ❖ Ecumenical small informal Thank God It's Friday evening worship monthly in the village hall. 	<p>All Saints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A traditional Festival Church; services are well attended ❖ Hosts and holds worship alongside village events at key times of year (June Parish Party) ❖ Annual services at old chancel, Waterhay <div data-bbox="900 1637 1356 1977" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>Service at Waterhay Chancel</i></p>
<p>Benefice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Joint service once a month in St Sampson's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Marriage Preparation Courses.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 5th Sunday service rotating around the Benefice (mainly communion) ❖ Thursday morning prayers at St Sampson's ❖ Activities held in each parish are offered across the Benefice e.g. Bible, Prayer Groups, Alpha etc. 	
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Big Services

“Big services” enable different age groups to come together and encourage non church attenders to connect with God, and are well supported.

Christmas all four parishes hold very well attended Carol services, Christmas Eve services,(including Crib and Midnight Communion), Christmas Day worship and Christingle events (in conjunction with schools).

All Souls Services in [St Sampson's](#) and [Holy Cross](#), when we remember those who have died, enable the Benefice to welcome bereaved families once again.

Remembrance Sunday a key civic occasion in Cricklade, Ashton Keynes and the Leigh; uniformed organisations and civic personnel are involved.

Harvest welcomes all ages including non-church attenders. Celebrations include a shared lunch in Cricklade (often supporting a charity such as Christian Aid or Send a Cow), a well-attended Harvest lunch for all ages in the school hall in Ashton Keynes or a Harvest barn dance in the church, a community Harvest event in Latton, and a harvest tea and bake-off in Leigh.

St Sampson's Day in Cricklade is a great opportunity to invite others and where all the congregations come together followed by a BBQ in the churchyard.



St Sampson's Day Service & Picnic 2020

Home Groups have been a feature of church life in Cricklade and Latton for many years. Day time and evening groups usually lay led, cover all ages (e.g. Wed morning combines a children with adult group) and welcome people from across the Benefice and are ecumenical. Materials used range from York Courses, books (e.g. John Ortberg) or films (e.g. Les Miserables), or are Bible-based.

Alpha courses in Cricklade and Latton have included participants from existing home groups as well as “enquirers”. The courses offered use the latest HTB material and included a Holy Spirit day at the nearby Harnhill Centre for Christian Healing.

Groups with a particular focus or aim have flourished in the past in Ashton Keynes and Cricklade e.g. a Bible study group for seniors; Lent groups and Lent lunches.

Lent courses organised by Churches Together have been popular in the past, when a wide variety of Christian speakers gave their testimony – drawn from such diverse backgrounds as reformed

criminals, MPs, businesspeople, and the armed forces, they attract attendees both regular and non-worshippers from a wide area.

Prayer underpins life in our parishes. Individual and collective prayer is encouraged in the different seasons - Advent, Easter, and Christmas - with the help of booklets, courses to be followed by individuals or opportunities e.g. Thy Kingdom Come, 24 hours of prayer and by special services.

Prayer Networks [St Sampson's](#) has a 70-strong online Prayer Network; people are asked to pray in their own time in response to requests. Members of [Holy Cross](#) congregation take part in a prayer network to pray for particular people in need.

Messy Church and the weekly '**Open the Book**' assemblies engage the children at our CofE primary schools in Bible Stories and prayer.

Thursday morning prayers with coffee, at 8.30 am draws people from across the Benefice to pray and offer one other support.

Worship during Lockdown

Both Zoom and FaceBook Morning Prayer and Sunday YouTube services have been provided across the Benefice.

[St Sampson's](#), [Holy Cross](#) and [St John the Baptist](#) opened their church buildings for private prayer in ways to suit each of the locations as soon as it was practicable.

The Benefice is now opening three churches to facilitate connecting with God through collective worship. With aging congregations, much thought has been given to achieving this safely.

(C) Connecting with our communities

Our churches are united by a common mission of '**Creating opportunities for everyone to experience God's love**', sharing a wide range of activities which bring people together, embracing 'church' as the people rather than just the buildings. The events range from old traditions to new initiatives all offering a warm and friendly welcome – we would like the Priest in Charge to offer support for, and attend some of, these events.

Coffee mornings provide a significant and important role in bringing communities together. Coffee and tea, encouraging time for fellowship, are served after Sunday services at all four churches.

St Sampson's Ran coffee mornings open to the community in church during the summer holidays	Holy Cross Ran a café in the village hall and in summertime served cream teas in the church
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	 <p data-bbox="858 450 1326 479">Cream tea in the church for 'the retired'</p>
<p data-bbox="204 524 453 553">St John the Baptist</p> <p data-bbox="204 562 810 831">Monthly village café with 40+ visitors over a two-hour period. Local residents donate homemade sausage rolls and cakes. Attracts a wide range of residents and people from nearby villages, including families. Donations are a great help towards the running costs of the Village Hall.</p> 	<p data-bbox="858 524 983 553">All Saints</p>

Social events arranged by all the churches include pub nights, quizzes, games nights, fetes, parties, Harvest Lunches and BBQ's and are open to the wider community.

<p data-bbox="204 1256 381 1285">St Sampson's</p> <ul data-bbox="252 1335 831 1874" style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's 'Pub Group' which meets at The Red Lion alternate Thursdays when a variety of discussion points are enjoyed. • Monthly Sunday lunch club at the White Hart Hotel for women living on their own which is well attended by the women from the town. • An indoor games night last spring bringing together people of all ages from the church. • Annual BBQ in the church grounds is held in July to mark St. Sampson's Day; all ages are involved as well as non-church members. 	<p data-bbox="858 1256 999 1285">Holy Cross</p> <ul data-bbox="906 1335 1445 1532" style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards many village events and runs its own summer fete and Christmas Bazaar, and Compline during the three-yearly Music/Arts festival
<p data-bbox="204 1888 453 1917">St John the Baptist</p> <ul data-bbox="252 1966 810 2112" style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual village BBQ • Annual Quiz Night with Men's Pudding Competition • Monthly Village Pub Night 	<p data-bbox="858 1888 983 1917">All Saints</p> <ul data-bbox="906 1966 1485 2040" style="list-style-type: none"> • As the only public building, the church is where the villagers can meet together

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The annual village party is an example of the church and the Parish Council reaching out together |
|--|---|

School links

SIAM's inspection reports have praised the school/church partnerships and at the last inspections both St Sampson's and Ashton Keynes Primary Schools were judged "outstanding".

[Holy Cross](#) and [St Sampson's](#) lead "Open the Book" assemblies in their local schools and members of the Ministry Team occasionally take morning assemblies. Local schools hold their carol, harvest and school leavers' services at these churches.

[Holy Cross](#) has twice supported and hosted iSingpop (iSingpop aims to bring schools, churches communities together through worship songs).

Helping in the wider community

Generous donations are made to local Food Banks through boxes kept in church.

Every five months members of **St. Sampson's Church** donate food and make sandwiches for the Filling Station in Swindon, a charity which feeds the hungry and homeless.

[Holy Cross](#) feeds into community WhatsApp Groups on Creativity and Green Issues and is planning to become an Eco Church.

During the Covid 19 lockdown, church members from [St Sampson's](#) and [Holy Cross](#) have kept in touch with people in their local communities, especially the vulnerable.

Fund Raising events

Over the years many fund raising events have taken place to help maintain the fabric of the churches.

At [St Sampson's](#), the choir has organised and performed in concerts.

The church tower has been open to the public during the Cricklade Festival in June when they gain spectacular views over Cricklade and surrounding area; refreshments are also served in the church. There is the bi-annual Flower Festival held in [St Sampson's](#), and an Open Gardens event organised by church members.



Pictures Courtesy of Abbey Studios

The Church Roof Appeal Team is currently fundraising and had a full programme for the summer 2020 but this was postponed because of Covid.

At [All Saints](#), Save Leigh Church group fund raise to maintain the building for future generations.

At [Holy Cross](#), the church has a Friends of Holy Cross Group (FoHC), which raises funds to ensure that the church building can be enjoyed by future generations. Events held include talks and exhibitions and they have held two very successful Summer Balls in the building.



Christmas

Christmas tree lighting, Christingle, carol and crib services bring the people from the villages and the town of Cricklade together in our different churches.



Members of [Holy Cross](#) enjoy beer and carols in the local pub too!

[St Sampson's](#), biennial Christmas Tree Festivals are supported by 30-plus organisations from within the community participating. Each Festival has witnessed a footfall of over 700 people.



Picture Courtesy of Abbey Studios

At [St John the Baptist](#), the Latton Café is transformed into the Christmas tree lighting event, bringing the community together and is particularly popular with the children as Father Christmas makes an appearance.



Beating the Bounds around Cricklade

Beating the Bounds organised by the Court Leet, which invites the incumbent to become an officer of the court. During the walk prayers are said by them at various stopping places. There is a public Court meeting and ale-tasting every two years and an annual Court meal. The Court's main work is to manage grazing rights in North Meadow and continue traditions.

(C) Engaging the Younger Generations

The churches of the Upper Thames Benefice seek to engage the younger generations in their parishes in a variety of ways, this aspect of ministry and mission is a priority and remains a challenge.

The partnerships with our two CofE Primary schools (Cricklade St Sampson's and Ashton Keynes) are of huge importance to this aspect of church life and bear fruit in our churches. Two teams from Churches Together provide weekly interactive school worships using "Open the Book" which are much loved and remembered by pupils. The Ministry Team has led worship regularly on other occasions, and the two schools hold festival services in the local churches with children involved in planning and leading.

Holiday clubs are an important way of engaging younger generations and until recently these were led and supported by Churches Together, taking place in the seasons of Easter and in a half term. A wide range of children from all parishes attend.



Ashton Keynes School with [Holy Cross](#) achieved the school-church partnership award and Ashton Keynes Messy Church, moved from Sunday afternoon to an after-school event, welcomes over 40 children. The Associate Minister and head teacher have partnered to develop children's prayer lives and the school worship council contributes to church worships. [Holy Cross](#) has twice supported iSingpop in the village school with performances held in the Church.

Other opportunities to engage with young generations in Latton include the informal family worship, festival services and community events such as the Latton café. Similarly, in Leigh, it is the big community and festival times which involve younger generations.

Sunday@4pm Informal Worship at [St Sampson's](#) for families with children and young people of all ages is a large part of the church community. This began five years ago, growing to a congregation of around 65 but declined due to difficulties in the parish recently. Its vision is to offer a more

relaxed gathering, with less liturgy and contemporary worship songs which engages the younger generations and welcomes anyone who prefers an informal style of worship. Those involved have discovered the benefits of worshipping as an all age group, learning together and having fun, as well as separating into adults' and children's groups to meet different needs.



The monthly social times have included games, tea, a walk, quiz, bonfire party and even a bake-off competition which have strengthened relationships within the group and across the ages. Above all, the group seeks God and encourages one another, as they walk and grow in relationship with Him.

(D) Connecting with Each Other

Communication within Parishes

There are regular newsletters/magazines which are circulated to the congregations and the general community. Ashton Keynes has a monthly newsletter, established by the church, Cricklade has the monthly Cricklade Chronicle, originally established by the then vicar of St Sampson's, which is now printed and circulated by Cricklade Churches Together.

During lockdown we have found creative ways of staying in touch within parishes, from hand-delivered leaflets to regular phone calls to our congregations, Zoom meetings, WhatsApp groups and emails. These support networks have been successful and it's hoped they will continue.

The Associate Minister has kept in touch with [Holy Cross](#) through regular email news bulletins. [St Sampson's](#) PCC has an email news bulletin which is circulated at least once a month. The Informal Worship group at [St Sampson's](#) also regularly circulates its members by email.

Communication amongst parishes

The Benefice Administrator circulates information electronically throughout the Benefice including links to the online services and Zoom meetings, etc. during the coronavirus crisis.

During the vacancy, a Transition Team has been established and it is intended for this to morph into a Group Council, after several years without one.

There is a Benefice Website – www.upperthames.org.uk, with different pages for each church. It contains a calendar covering events and services. There are regular updates with news and event information, and some PCC minutes and church newsletters are online.

[St Sampson's](#), [St John the Baptist](#) and [Holy Cross](#) have Facebook pages. [St Sampson's](#) also has a roof appeal Facebook page and the Leigh has a Save Leigh Church as well.



Benefice Service at Waterhay

Communication between benefice and deanery/diocese

As well as administrative communications we have had visits from the Bishops as well as the Archdeacon and members of the North Wiltshire Deanery.

Communication with the wider world

We counter the danger that a partially rural benefice in North Wiltshire could become isolated from needs and issues of the wider world in a number of ways.

Our churches actively participate in initiatives such as Food Banks, and ecological issues. We present a committed, supportive, and thoughtful public image in our online social media. We play a part in our communities' interface with wider populations, through cultural and social events, and activities such as festivals etc. We have a link with Uganda through the Diocese, and several members of the benefice have visited that area on a diocese-organised trip. There is, however, undoubtedly more that could be done.

Churches Together in Cricklade and Latton

[St Sampson's](#), [St John the Baptist](#), St Mary's Catholic Church and Cricklade United Church (United Reform & Methodist) have been in an ecumenical partnership since 2001. Recently we have only met twice a year with the incumbents each chairing for a year.

We collaborate on Maundy Thursday services and Remembrance Day, have joined together in a Walk of Witness on Good Friday and supported Holiday Clubs for all children. We also hold a joint Christian Aid service at the beginning of that week and have been central in setting up Cricklade Assisting Refugees Escaping Conflict (CAREC) and Cricklade Foodbank.

(E) Human and physical resources and opportunities

Human Resources

One of the strengths of the Benefice is the people who make up the church families. Despite the absence of leadership over the past few years, the congregations are resilient and cohesive groups who have worked together to continue worship and celebrate fellowship within the churches and wider communities, as well as raising the funds to undertake the work of the church and maintain our buildings. The Ministry Team has provided spiritual continuity and leadership during the incumbent's absences. We are very strongly team-orientated and use teams to address a variety of areas. Many of our congregations have gifts and talents which they share within the church and wider communities.

Physical Resources

St Sampson's, Cricklade



Jenner Hall

- Grade I listed building, with ancient Celtic Dedication, just off Cricklade High Street
- For almost 1100 years people have been coming to St Sampson's to seek and find God
- St Sampson's most distinctive feature is its square tower, built between 1500 and 1550, one of 'the glories of Wiltshire', and a landmark in the Upper Thames Valley, visible for miles and floodlit at night. At Easter and Christmas (and latterly during the Coronavirus pandemic), an illuminated cross tops the tower, automatically drawing the eye to the church
- A significant number of visitors come throughout the year
- Acoustic qualities of the Church are exceptionally fine, and concerts are frequently held here. Every effort is made to preserve this character of the Church while adapting to modern needs
- St Sampson's Church features in "*England's Thousand Best Churches*" by Simon Jenkins' (2013) and is applauded by Betjamen and Pevsner
- Kitchen and toilet facilities
- Adjoining Churchyard, the upkeep of which is the responsibility of the Town Council, is closed. A parish cemetery 200 yards further down Bath Road is used for both burials and interment of ashes
- Church of England owns the Jenner Hall, a Grade II listed building next door, where the Benefice Office is located. Managed by a board of Trustees under an Albemarle Agreement, it raises money to preserve the building so that it has become a popular venue to hire in Cricklade
- Currently the biggest challenge is the leaking roof. A project to make the Church watertight, remedying water damage and making the Church warmer, lighter, and more useable for church activities and wider community events, is underway
- Seeking to establish a Friends of St Sampson's Church group through the steering group
- 2018 Quinquennial Inspection - all works listed as 'Urgent' and 'Essential within the first 18 months have been completed
- Building Manager in place
- Following a period of four years without church wardens, we currently have two in place
- Financially, the last few years have been difficult and the Covid 19 pandemic has been a challenge. The PCC took the difficult decision to withhold the parish share from July 2020 until on a more stable footing, when it is hoped to pay the outstanding amount. Joined the Parish Giving Scheme in 2019 and also have regular givers through standing orders

Holy Cross, Ashton Keynes



- Grade I listed building which has been enlarged and renovated at various times since it was founded in the 12th century. Located on the edge of the village
- Small kitchen and toilet facilities
- Large car park
- Open church yard, towards the maintenance of which Parish Council contribute
- Quinquennial Inspection in 2016 highlighted poor condition of the bell tower roof; refurbished in early 2019 and LED lighting was installed
- Next project is to install adjustable LED lighting in the remaining areas of the Church, reducing energy consumption as part of pursuing EcoChurch accreditation
- No church hall - uses Village Hall for fundraising events and primary school hall for Messy Church activities and Harvest Lunches
- Friends of Holy Cross continue to work to provide financial support of the Church building and towards running costs
- Financially stable at present in part due to the Friends of Holy Cross

St John the Baptist, Latton



Village Hall

- 12th century cruciform church
- No kitchen or toilet facilities
- Open church yard
- On street parking
- Village Hall, former village school (now owned by the Diocese).
- Situated at the centre of the village and this helps give both community and church a shared focus as St John's seeks to make greater use of its unique heritage

- Greatest need is to reorder the church to include piped water, upgraded lighting and heating; options have been identified with the aim of providing facilities suitable for both worship and village social activities
- Until recently, the Hall was managed and funded by the Latton Parish Council, now managed and funded by the PCC. The Parish Council provides a grant towards the operational costs in recognition of its importance to the village
- Diocese is looking to obtain a ruling from the Charity Commissioners to determine if the proceeds from the sale of the Village Hall can be used for re-ordering the Church. Other funds are available from a bequest and from applications for available grants
- 2019 Quinquennial Inspection Report identified that the buildings were fundamentally sound. The Hall desperately needs extensive renovation. Quotations for remedial work to the church, damaged window mesh and dangerous access in the Bell Tower are being sought
- Festival services donations together with some other small income, both support the church's running costs and the parish share. A village 100 Club provides income for maintenance of the fabric of the church and this, along with the occasional grant, has enabled on-going basic maintenance expenses to be met. A significant bequest has been received recently which can be used for maintenance and re-ordering of the church
- Financially, Covid and other factors meant a significant reduction in the parish share for 2021

All Saints Church, the Leigh



Old Chancel at Waterhay

- Grade II listed building, generally in good repair
- Constructed circa 1250 on a previous site in the village at Waterhay
- 1896-7 due to recurrent flooding, Church moved stone by stone to its current position in Swan Lane, leaving behind the original chancel as a mortuary chapel
- 2019 Quinquennial Inspection - all urgent issues highlighted have been completed or are in progress
- Church grounds managed by a small team of volunteers. In recent years there has been a strong shift towards a more natural churchyard, encouraging wildlife and native wildflowers and grasses within the older areas of the Graveyard
- In 2006, after essential repairs to the tower roof, the Church was essentially bankrupt. The community formed the Save Leigh Church Fund. Hugely successful, this group is dedicated to raising funds for the upkeep of the building and future improvements, and has a healthy balance
- Currently seeking a faculty for an eco-toilet in the Church grounds, and removal of the pews at the western end of the Nave to create a friendly multi-purpose space for the church and village

- Financially the parish share for 2020 was reduced by two thirds.

(F) Context Summaries

Upper Thames Group Benefice Operational Summary i.e. how well we function as a Benefice

	Working well	Getting there	Needs work
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry team Marriage prep General Admin support Administration of Occasional Offices Diversity of worship Maintenance and enhancement of church buildings Willing to move forward Transition Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support groups/Home groups (across the Benefice) Communication across amongst the churches. Worshipping together Online worship Group Council Harnessing potential/releasing gifts Engagement with the Mission Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefice Strategic thinking and planning Evangelism
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funerals Open the Book Churches are known in the community/ministry team seen as representative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect well with our communities but room for improvement Connecting with Baptism families Connecting with children and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with our local communities Mission and serving the community (currently in maintenance mode)

St. Sampson's Cricklade

	Working well	Getting there	Needs work
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of service styles 'Big services' well attended Four well established home groups Award winning choir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs to the roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregations from the different services rarely worship together Income <i>not</i> meeting running costs at present Communication among the church Family

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two church wardens after a period of none • Covid guidelines to enable groups meetings and fellowship
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenner Hall well cared for under Albemarle Trust • Social activities open to all in the town • Cricklade Assisting Refugees Escaping Conflict (CAREC) • Cricklade Foodbank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication mostly by email circulation and the Cricklade Chronicle • Facebook page for church and Roof Appeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to re-order the building to become a community facility

Holy Cross Ashton Keynes

	Working well	Getting there	Needs work
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual 'Big services' very well attended • Involved in /sometimes lead village events e.g. Fetes, Festivals, Balls • Working with Ashton Keynes C of E primary school – Open the Book, Messy Church, ISingpop • Working towards Eco Church status • 2 Church Wardens and well-functioning PCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compline and other occasional services • Church Building • Online activities – Zoom, YouTube, Facebook • Informal prayer group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small elderly congregation some of whom are resistant to change. • Making church relevant to modern life • Some younger families who find it difficult to connect with/attend traditional Sunday worship • Discipleship and growing faith
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Holy Cross Church (FoHC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral work • Online activities – Zoom, YouTube, Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication/connections

St. John the Baptist Latton

	Working well	Getting there	Needs work
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of service styles • Open to change • 'Big services' well attended • Two well established home groups • Regular Alpha courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to explore new options for worship • Latton Christians eager to unite around agreed initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small congregation • Young people and children rarely attend normal services • Income <i>just</i> meets running costs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of being part of the Benefice • Ministry team working well together 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to re-order the building to become a village facility
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latton Café very popular with all ages • Village Pub night building a sense of community • Village BBQ and Quiz night firm favourites • Christmas tree lighting event brings everyone together – especially the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication mostly by Facebook and the Cricklade Chronicle • Priest-in-charge needs to have greater visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church-owned Village hall deteriorating fast

All Saints the Leigh

	Working well	Getting there	Needs work
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big services well attended • Annual open air Chancel services • Carol service very popular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to explore new options for worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's work lapsed • Small income
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Parish party brings village together • Christmas Tree lighting event enjoyed by all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication mainly by Facebook page or leaflet drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like building used more often

5. Pattern of Worship

	St Sampson's Cricklade	Holy Cross Ashton Keynes	St John the Baptist Latton	All Saints The Leigh
1st Sunday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am BCP Communion • 10am Communion • 4pm Informal Worship Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am BCP Communion • 10am Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.15am Communion 	
2nd Sunday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am BCP Communion & Breakfast • 10am Upper Thames Group Service • 4pm Informal Worship • 6.30pm Evensong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4pm Evensong (winter) • 6pm Evensong (summer) 		

1st Thursday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11am "Home Communion" at Cricklade Open Door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11am "Home Communion" 		
2nd Thursday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am "Home Communion" in Heberden House 			
Friday			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.30pm TGI Friday worship in Latton village hall 	
3rd Sunday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8am BCP Communion 10am Communion 4pm Informal Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Morning Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.15am Morning Worship 	
4th Sunday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8am BCP Communion 10am Morning Worship 4pm Informal Worship 6.30pm Evensong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Communion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.15am Family Service 	
5th Sunday in the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 am BCP communion 10 am Upper Thames Group Service at either Holy Cross or St John the Baptist or All Saints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Upper Thames Group Service at either Holy Cross or St John the Baptist or All Saints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 am Upper Thames Group Service at either Holy Cross or St John tB or All Saints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 am Upper Thames Group Service at either Holy Cross or St John tB or All Saints

8. Finance and Statistics

Parish	Cricklade	Ashton Keynes	Latton	Leigh
Population (estimate)	4227	1800	518	300
Baptisms				
2017	18	10	0	0
2018	13	5	1	2
2019	16	6	0	0
Weddings				
2017	6	3	0	1
2018	6	2	3	1
2019	7	1	0	0
Funerals				
2017	19	9	1	2
2018	19	11	1	0
2019	16	10	3	1
Electoral roll				
2017	119	74	13	12
2018	133	68	14	10
2019	85	53		13

			13	
Normal Sunday Attendance				
2017	114	20	10	0
2018	92	20	10	0
2019	75	20	12	0
Parish Share				
2017	£49,308	£25,000	£2,600	£804
2018	£45,000	£20,000	£2,990	£1,400
2019	£46,140	£21,000	£3,490	£1,400

14. Appendices

The Four Communities of the Upper Thames Group

The Town of Cricklade



Cricklade High Street

- 9th Century Saxon town is the first on the River Thames
- Surrounded by remarkable countryside with two nature reserves and the Thames Path National Trail passing through, visitors throughout the year
- The largest of the four parishes, three small scale building developments, mainly as infill to the existing town, are in progress
- The majority of people commute to work
- A great place for families with a wide range of leisure activities and facilities.
 - Fairview Fields area of open space for leisure and recreational purposes which encompasses the Millennium and Jubilee Woods, and through which the Thames Path passes.
 - Leisure Centre the recently refurbished main sports facility includes swimming pool and outdoor tennis courts.
 - Bowling green, and football, rugby and cricket pitches
 - 9-hole golf course at Cricklade House Hotel and Spa
- Heberden House which has individual flats for many aged over 55 and with priority housing need
- Social groups include WI, Art Group, Garden Club, Book Groups, Historical Society, British Legion, uniformed groups for the younger generations, a Theatre Group, Bloomers, who maintain floral displays in town, and a community choir
- Link Scheme provides transport to medical appointments for those without transport
- High Street is the bustling heart of Cricklade with a variety of shops from small branches of chain stores to independent shops and a post office
- Two doctor's surgeries, a dental surgery, opticians, osteopath, a vet's surgery, local library, hairdressers, beauty salon,
- Two repair garages and a body repair shop

- Three pubs; in particular, the Red Lion is well known for its home brewed beers and CAMRA awards and provides excellent bar and restaurant meals.
- Town Festival every June and, during the winter months; there is a
- Community cinema monthly in the Town Hall September - April
- Twinned with Suce-Sur-Erdre, France and there are frequent visits between the two locations
- Schools, St Sampson's CofE primary school, two private prep schools and a four nurseries/pre-schools.
- The Manorial Court for the Hundred and Borough of Cricklade has been in existence since the 14th century and is one of only 32 that remain today; it normally invites the vicar (priest-in-charge) to become an officer of the court. There is a public Court meeting and ale tasting every two years and an annual Court meal. The Court's main work is to manage grazing rights in North Meadow and continue local traditions. Under the Town Hall's Trust Deed, the Vicar (priest-in-charge) of the Parish is a Holding Trustee under the Charity Commissioners.

Ashton Keynes Village



River Thames in Ashton Keynes

- **Vibrant and social village** with a strong sense of community
- **A great village for families**; it has a CoE primary school, a private nursery, a pre-school and baby and toddler group.
- **A very sporty village** with hard tennis courts, 2 large sports fields with pavilions and a hard surface court. All ages football and cricket teams plus variety of other clubs such as Badminton, Seniors Table Tennis, All Stars Golf, Walking Group etc.
- **A musical village** – a village choir and a range of musical groups and bands such as the 'Magnificent AK 47s', 'the Siren Sisters', 'Big Brunch Band' etc. Every 3 years the village holds The AK Festival which has a strong musical focus held in different venues around the village.
- **The Village Hall** is a key asset. Located centrally it hosts a doctor's branch surgery, the Pre-school, the twice weekly outreach Post office and 'cafe', Mobile Library and Rural Cinema. Location too for many village social events.
- A range of **social and support groups** ranging from the WI, Golden Years, Wine Groups, Book Groups, Creative Writing Group, Bridge, Art and 'Create' groups to AK Twinning Group, The AK Green Project (environment group), The Link Scheme and The Ashton Keynes Street Wardens scheme (formed during Lockdown and continues)
- The **Community Village shop** is attached to the Village Hall on the High Road. The **White Hart** is the village pub, whose licence is held by a group of villagers. **The Millenium Green** A grass and wooded area on the edge of the village, maintained and used by villagers.
- Work. Pre Covid many people commuted outside the village to work eg to South Cerney, Swindon, Bristol, London etc. Currently there many more home workers. There are a wide variety of businesses operating from the village eg coach company, cookery school, funeral directors, garden and landscaping, farming, hairdressing and beauty, plumbing and building etc

Latton Village



- A small village surrounded by agricultural land. There is no school, shop or public house, community facilities consist of a playing field, two post boxes and a small community garden.
- The church and the village hall play a key role in the life of the village.
- The village is served by a bus service which links with Cirencester, Cheltenham and Swindon.

The Leigh



Annual Village Party

- A peaceful village
- Initially established by the river, where the church originated and the Old Chancel still stands, now spread out. Most of the housing is along the B4040, with a small estate built near to the church, the remainder being outlying farms
- The church is currently the only public building since the pub closed
- There is no longer a primary school, the children mainly attending Ashton Keynes School.
- Agriculture was the main source of work in the past but there are few working farms left. Most people go outside the village for work
- There are no leisure facilities in the village, although many horses are either kept privately or at livery
- There is a small playing area for children at the back of the housing estate, a nature reserve accessed from the main road and one of the water parks at the opposite end of the village.

Picture Gallery



St Sampson's Award Winning Choir



St Sampson's Singalong to the Sound of Music evening



St Sampson's Games Night



St Sampson's Christmas Tree Festival (Courtesy of Abbey Studios)



Baptism Holy Cross



All Saint's Harvest Supper

All Saints Carol Service



Holy Cross Wedding Dress Exhibition



**Singalong at St Sampson's Christmas Tree Festival
(Curtesy of Abbey Studios)**



Communion Heberden House



Coffee Heberden House



Wedding St Sampson's



BBQ St John the Baptist



Barn dance held in the church in aid of Friends of Holy cross



AK47 Concert Holy Cross and have also and have also sung in St Sampson's



Church summer Fete held in Church Walk



VE Day Concert and tea in the village hall



Christmas Bazaar held in the village hall

Both in aid of Friends of Holy Cross church