



**The Parish Church
of
St Sebastian's
Wokingham Without
RG40 3AT**

www.stsebschurch.org.uk

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Foreword: The Area Dean of Sonning



the Rev'd Canon Richard Lamey

Rector of St Paul's, Wokingham and Area Dean of Sonning

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St Sebastian's is a fascinating and rewarding parish. As you will read, pre-Covid, it was a thriving and successful Evangelical Church which offered a wide range of activities and groups to its members and in the community. It punched above its weight in terms of its impact and effectiveness. The previous Vicar led the Church with real skill and wisdom for over 20 years but became ill in the early days of Covid and took early retirement on the grounds of ill-health in February 2022. The legacy of this period without a functioning minister is apparent, both in terms of rebuilding a congregation which has been somewhat scattered, and in terms of balancing the books. The leadership team has worked hard, and continues to do so.

It feels as if there is a pause now, a rest, as St Sebs listen to discern who God is calling to walk with them and to lead them so that exciting and important things will start to flow again, as God leads his people into the future he is creating for them. People will soon be ready to continue the pilgrimage given a Vicar who is patient and wise with people and excited by God's call on their own life and on the life of the Church.

So the new Vicar will be joining the congregation after a challenging few years.

In the short term, the Vicar's job will be to come in and offer leadership and care and time. Some things which look solid might not be. Some things which look fragile might be waiting to burst into life. Some people are more tired than they realise and some people feel tired but are just waiting to fly with the right encouragement and the right support. There are a significant number of committed and experienced volunteers as well as four popular and talented paid employees.

In the medium term, the Vicar's job will be prayerfully to help the Church set its course for the next decade and beyond. Some big issues need to be addressed, but there are many secure pillars to build around, and a growing local community which is hungry for the Gospel.

Wokingham is a good place to live. The Deanery is in good heart and contains a wide range of Church traditions, all of whom enjoy coming together for prayer and mutual support every

second Tuesday. The Archdeaconry and Diocese are well-led, financially sustainable and basically happy.

If you have any questions at all then please do not hesitate to contact me, or Bishop Olivia, the Bishop of Reading, and we would be delighted to talk things through with you.

the Rev'd Canon Richard Lamey
Area Dean of Sonning

Introduction to St Sebastian's

Welcome

Welcome and thank you for your interest in our Parish Profile.

This Parish Profile has is the result of widespread consultation and contributions from a wide range of people, some members of the leadership team or PCC, others with a particular interest. We aim to set out a description of our church, our parish, our vision and mission. We hope that its content will give you sufficient insight into our church community to enable you to discern whether the Lord is calling you to St Sebastian's.



Who are we?

St Sebastian's is the church serving the parish of Wokingham Without in semi-rural East Berkshire. The parish is unusual in that it has no community centre. The parish has recently expanded to incorporate a new housing development at Buckler's Park, Crowthorne. Further information in relation to our setting can be found in [Appendix 1](#) and our community [Appendix 2](#).

We are a church with a big heart for Jesus, the Holy Spirit and prayer, that supports all our decision making. We are of a charismatic evangelical tradition. We are a church centred on Jesus and try to be outward facing and mission focussed, whilst nurturing the spiritual health of those who attend.

We have formally been in interregnum since the beginning of March 2022, but prior to that our incumbent had been in ill health starting with COVID from the beginning of the pandemic and continuing until his retirement, so we are sorely in need of renewed leadership after a protracted leadership absence.

We have a well-developed team leadership structure to support the needs of the church. This covers pastoral care, prayer, music, worship, small groups and youth in no particular order.

We have specific actions that we take to support the local community.

- The Base - our family and youth-based seeker service for new Christians and those investigating Christianity and looking for fellowship
- Help distribute food to those in need
- Engagement with the mobile home sites that are very close to the church site, providing practical and spiritual support through Fare share and Little Angels toddler group for example

All of our activity is supported by:

- Prayerfulness
- Prayer centred decision making & planning
- A sense of the presence of God
- Listening to God
- Openness to the Holy Spirit

We are also open to new things and are looking forward to new ideas and approaches that build on the work that is already in hand. To find out more about our church life please refer to [Appendix 3](#).

What else do we want to do:

- Provide a path for seekers and new Christians to gain a greater understanding of Jesus
- Regain our focus – we have been without a leader for a long time
- Refreshment of the congregation – some are exhausted
- Refreshing the congregation – we have lost members during and since COVID
- Release the energy and enthusiasm in the congregation to build a thriving, vibrant church
- Further strengthen the links with St Sebastian's School; the staff, pupils and parents. Several church members are on the Governing Body including the Chair of Governors
- Consider how we adapt our buildings to allow us more freedom to worship and serve the community in different ways
- Expand our reach into the newly created housing development of Buckler's Park which has become a part of the Parish
- We want to continue to share Jesus with people in our local communities in a relevant way
- Review our vision with new leadership helping set fresh priorities for the future
- Develop our environmental and sustainability activities and ethos

What are our challenges?

- Providing a journey for those new Christians who come through the Base
- Reconnecting with those who have disconnected during the pandemic
- Building links with the new part of the parish at Buckler's Park – how do we address this opportunity to share Jesus with new people?
- Live Streaming and recorded services which would hugely help those we have lost during the pandemic
- Giving. Like most churches we are struggling for finance ([Appendix 4](#)). We have always paid our parish share. In 2021 we had a deficit for the first time in many years. This year we again face using our Reserves to cover a deficit. While we are taking steps to increase our income, in 2023 we still face having to fund a significant deficit from Reserve

These are the things which are not great which we believe are stopping us getting to where God and the community are calling us to be. Here we are looking for leadership and guidance.

What we hope our new vicar will be like?

- Places Jesus at the centre of everything that is done
- Is open to new ideas and opportunities and prepared to take some risks

- Can develop our vision and harness energy and resources to help us achieve it
- Can shepherd the existing congregation and provide ways for new people to engage with the Church
- Has experience of increasing giving
- Can help us develop further collaboration with the school and local area, building further involvement with the community at large

Why might you want to be our new vicar?

We are a single church parish, embedded in Wokingham Without which lies between Crowthorne, Wokingham and Bracknell in semi-rural East Berkshire.

We are a small church with a big heart for Jesus, the Holy Spirit and prayer. We are a church of a charismatic evangelical tradition.

We have three members of the Ministry team to share the load. We employ Family and Youth workers and part-time administrative cover. In addition, there are dedicated Churchwardens, PCC members and Team Leaders who look after specific areas of church life such as Pastoral Care and Worship, leaving the incumbent more time to concentrate on leadership and other areas of interest.

There is a sound foundation and love for Jesus, a consistent congregation in the church services and a growing number of people attending our Base services. These can all be built upon.

We have a reasonably well-maintained building with an active environment committee working to address maintenance issues as highlighted in the Quinquennial Inspection.; a modern Sound Desk and we are blessed with talented music worship groups.

The vicarage is a short walk from the Church and has recently undergone major refurbishment by the Diocese.

We have a reduced congregation since COVID when numbers have declined and there is scope to reengage with our previous congregation members.

Buckler's Park, a new housing estate has been added to the parish and provides a huge outreach opportunity as more houses are built and a Community Centre and primary school becomes available.

We need a time of restoration and then we need someone who will lift our eyes once more to the community and the Kingdom and all that God wants us to do, in faith.

Vision and Mission Statement

2022 Vision Day

We held a Vision Day in January 2022 in order to start the process of updating and refreshing our Parish Mission and Vision. This was attended by the Churchwardens, PCC, Ministry Team and the Team Leaders to look forward to the coming season whilst reflecting on the seasons that have passed.

We looked at the best of what is

What is valued at St Seb's, what do we want to thank God for, what is done well, where have we seen the church at its most Christ-like

And the best of what might be

Imagining that it is three years after the appointment of a new incumbent. What does it look and feel like? What is different? What challenges have been overcome?

This process is on hold whilst we await our new shepherd.

We have provided a summary of the feedback from this session in the [Appendix 5](#). We see this as a useful starting point for more discussion once the new incumbent is in place. This work is building on the current Parish Vision and Mission which are summarised here and described in more detail in the [Appendix 6](#).

Our Current Parish Mission Statement

Our current Mission Statement is based upon Isaiah 58 and was developed in early 2000.

This arose out of Prayer Workshops on "Listening to God" in which many from the church took part in January to March 2000. As we asked "What is God saying to the church?" a number of common themes emerged. These are summed up by the main themes of Isaiah 58, and represent a call to a faith that is worked out in practical love, evangelism, and Christ-centred community.

For more detailed information see the [Appendix 6](#).

Our Current Vision Statement

The Parish Vision

We recognise that we are far from being that kind of church at the moment, but the CROSS vision is both a reminder of Jesus' words, and a goal towards which we aim in our life as a church.

Based on John 17, this is our vision of the kind of church that God is calling us to become:

Christ-centred

Righteous

One

Sent

Spirit-filled

Feedback from our congregation /community

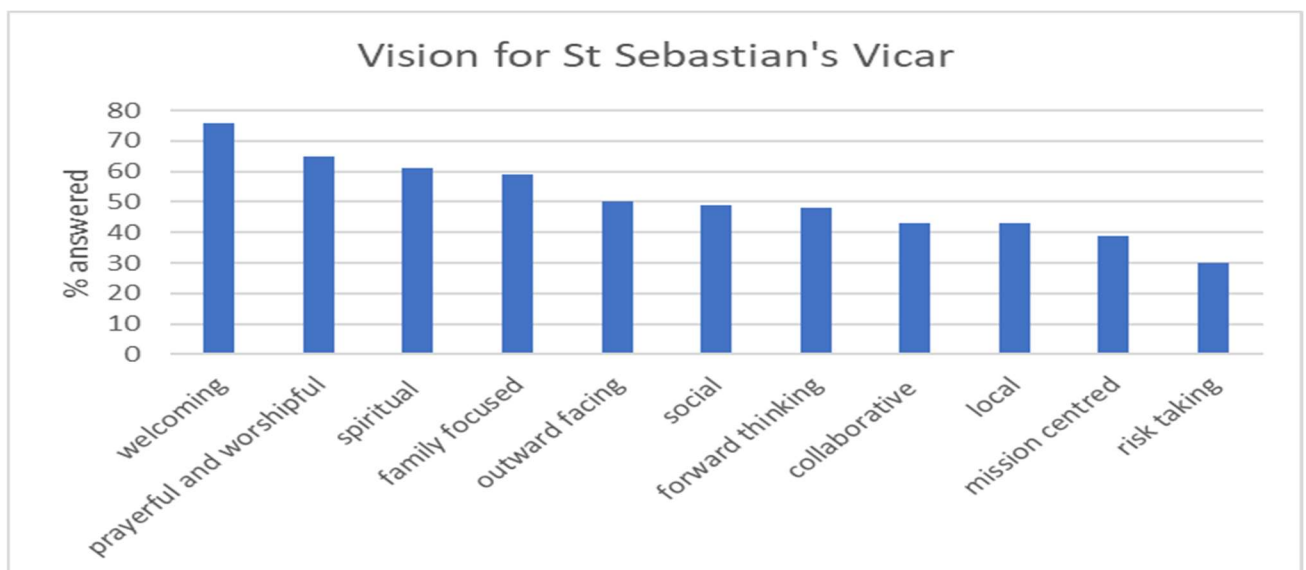
Questionnaire

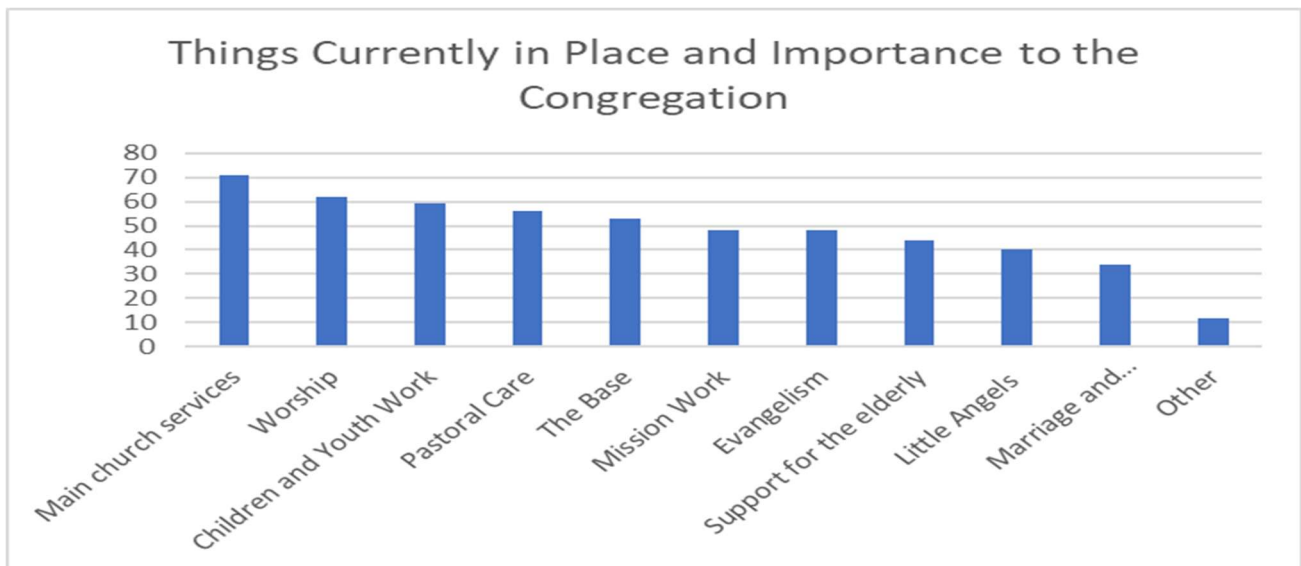
We reached out through a questionnaire to our congregation and community to ask what we do well and what is important to them, along with their preferred type of service.

The congregation at St Sebastians is a warm, welcoming and active team who thrive on community, prayer, worship and family. The views of the congregation were gathered together and the main elements that are valued are: the main church services, worship, children and youth work, pastoral care and The Base. All these elements are seen as successful, though now the congregation would like to see these elements being brought together so that the church as a whole feels more united. In summary:

'The church should feel like a hub, where people come together regularly to meet up, learn from each other, do exciting things together, are inspired, joyful and worshipful.'

We have pulled on some specific quotes and highlighted the range of responses to 2 specific questions below to provide a flavour of the answers received.





The detail of this is contained in the [Appendix 7](#) but here are some direct quotes that give a flavour of how we are viewed:

- ***St Sebs has modern informal worship. It has excellently led music groups to accompany worship. It has an excellent welcoming team. It has a very good teaching ministry alongside the use of spiritual gifts for healing during the services.***
- ***Welcome newcomers, a caring, loving, prayerful community who love Jesus. Good bible based teaching. Intergenerational which has been so important in the past.***
- ***Little Angels - it is a great support for new parents. Friday Night Live - it brings teenagers in contact with the church - many of which we don't see on Sunday. The base - it introduces people to the church in a relaxed atmosphere.***

St Sebastian's School

St Sebastian's Church of England Primary School and Nursery is a happy school with excellent relationships between pupils, staff, parents and governors. The school's aim is to provide the best possible education for the children within the context of a caring Christian ethos.

They believe that it is important that children experience the joy of learning, and the enthusiastic, dedicated team of staff are always working hard to provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that is enriched with exciting learning opportunities, meeting the personal needs of all learners. The school has **132 pupils** (not including the nursery children).

There are close links between the church and the school, the school are welcomed into church for special assemblies and church services. Marvin (youth worker) leads regular assemblies for the school and Amy (youth pastor) runs a regular worship club within the school.

We asked the Headteacher of St Sebastian's School to describe what the school would be looking for in a new Vicar and received this reply

As a school, we would like our new vicar to be approachable, compassionate and supportive. Moreover, we would like them to appreciate the importance of our Christian Vision and the St. Sebastian's family. Our new Vicar, must also be able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and relate with our children, their backgrounds and the challenges they may face. In addition to this, we would like them to celebrate and share the children's successes throughout the year and help to develop their understanding of the bible and how it links into our vision and values.

The relationship between the church and school is so important and I am keen to develop this further with the new vicar. On a personal level, I would also appreciate regular meetings with them to discuss the school and other wider issues.

Thanks,

Martin

Martin Gater

Head Teacher

Saint Sebastian's Church of England Primary School and Nursery

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"A school family where we help each other to flourish"

Support we will offer

As St Sebastian's new Vicar, we will offer our care and support and encourage you to maintain a sustainable ministry, including days off, holidays, adequate time for family, friends and recreation. As a loving church we will support you by giving time and resources to enable you to continue learning and developing your ministry.

You will not be alone but assisted by our three LLMs, our Family and Youth Workers, Administrators, Churchwardens, PCC, Pastoral Team, Standing Committee and other PCC committees and the Team Leaders. We are firmly committed to working with you to meet the challenges and pleasures of our parish.

Outside the parish there will be support from the Area Dean, Canon Richard Lamey, and the Deanery Chapter, as well as the Archdeacon of Berkshire, the Ven. Stephen Pullin, and the Area Bishop of Reading, the Right Revd Olivia Graham. Other support will come from the Parish Development Adviser, Rhodri Bowen, and other colleagues in Church House, Oxford. All of them know the parish well because of the particular journey we have been on over the last three years.

Ministry Team

We have 3 Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM) in this parish. There follows a brief contribution from each of them.

Russell

Russell spent his working life as an Electronic Engineer and Quality Engineer. Now mostly retired he has a nominally 1 day per week job as a Quality Manager for a small local company. He was Admitted and Licensed as a Reader/LLM at Oxford in 1988, and he and his wife moved to St Sebastian's Church in 2007. He currently oversees the Home Groups Team, and was until recently, together with his wife, Pastoral Team leader. He currently produces the services rota, ensuring that all the required slots are populated week by week, utilising David and Wendy our other LLMs, and available local clergy.

Wendy

I am currently a member of St Sebastians as a Licensed Lay Minister, completing my studies in 2018 and being licensed to the Parish in 2019. In my previous Church I had various roles, and these all led to that deeper calling for ministry training. I lead services and preach, with a passion for pilgrimage, prayer, Bible study and worship. I am also a Day Chaplain at Christ Church Cathedral, and I have been involved since my work experience during LLM training. I enjoy the interaction there with the variety of people who visit the Cathedral; hard work but great fun! In my employment career I had been involved in the Banking sector for over thirty years. However, my role at St Sebastians is currently against a backdrop of full time work in the NHS in Clinical Administration support. These have been challenging times, and I am praying how we as Church can encourage each other in our relationship with God.

David

I came to St Sebastian in 2010 after a family crisis and being told I was not welcome at the Baptist Church I attended. I was brought up in an Anglican family, went to a C of E school (where I saw great spiritual things) but moved to attend Baptist/Independent churches. I was supported, encouraged and helped at St Sebastian's by Andrew Marsden, along with the church, started preaching a little and went forward to training for LLM. I was licenced in 2018 and have served since then. I prefer preaching to leading, and have taken a good number of funerals recently, looking to have a service the mourners want, with a Christian message. I have asked not to be too involved in ministry as I work P/T for Churches Together and preach with that, am Leader of a Town Council and on the executive of Wokingham Borough Council.

The ministry of the LLMs has been invaluable during the Interregnum sharing in and facilitating many of the ministry tasks. They have been taking funerals and conducting interments.

Family and Youth workers

We are blessed with full time Family and Youth work spread across the Vogel family.

Marvin, Amy, Pearl, Mattie and Asher

Hello! We are the Vogels: Marvin, Amy, Pearl (8), Mattie (6) and Asher (2). We will be your neighbours as we live on site in the Church Flat. Marv and Amy will also be on the staff team with you. Marv is the Youth Pioneer Worker and Amy is the Family & Youth Pastor. Pearl and Mattie attend St Sebastian's School and Asher has just started at pre-school. We have been with St Sebastian's Church since late 2017. Before this we were in Zimbabwe, helping grow a rural camp charity. Marvin is originally from Zimbabwe and Amy lived there for six years after finishing university. We have worked for the church for a long time, both in Zimbabwe and in the Coventry & Warwickshire Diocese. This photo is from the wedding of two of our first young people in Warwick, who were in our youth group at 10 years old. This makes us feel really old! Marv has also worked as a sports coach and is obsessed with Cricket. You can see the local's team ground from our lounge window. Amy has also worked as a Primary School teacher and enjoys running in the local woods. We all love music and having friends come visit.



Our Church Office

The Church Office is open 4 days a week from 9am to 1pm, being manned by our church administrator 3 days a week and our finance administrator 1 day a week. Our church administrator also works remotely when not in the office so weekdays are fully covered. The Church Building is open to the public during the office opening hours.

The church administrator is responsible for the basic day to day running of the whole church site and independently handles all administrative tasks.

This includes

- the preparation of necessary service sheets, song words and notices for services, including baptisms and calling of banns (both certificates and registers).
- the management of church diary of events and building availability.
- ensuring the website and social media is updated on a regular basis.
- compiling and sending out a weekly newsletter, this newsletter is emailed to approx. 140 members.
- In addition to our email mailing list, we also have printed newsletters available in church for members to collect during a service (usually once a month).

Audio/Visual

The church has a modern 32 Channel digital PA system which was installed in 2017. The PA system was designed by a church PA specialist to provide the flexibility for supporting various types of church service, music group needs and ease of operation. It can even be controlled remotely from anywhere in the church if required. The PA system is run by a team of 5 on a rota.

The Audio Visual System is supported by hearing loops in the church and extension.

The Church Site

Apart from the Church itself the site consists of a number of buildings.

Main Church Building

The Church was built in 1864 and consists of a main chancel with altar, choir stalls, wooden pulpit, and a single bell in a wooden bell-tower. The main body of the church has timber flooring and a tiled aisle, with the main entrance and porch towards the rear. The extension was built in 1984 that provides additional accommodation for services or closed off to serve as a meeting room. This extension also includes a toilet and kitchenette.



Parish Centre

This was constructed in 1994 and incorporates offices for an Administrator and Pastoral Assistant, two meeting rooms, and reception area on the ground floor. Two counselling rooms, Youth Evangelist's office and the Youth Evangelist's accommodation (a large 3 bedroom flat) on the first floor.

Parish Hall

This was constructed in 1986 and consists of a large hall with toilets and kitchenette; it is mainly used for Scouts, Guides, Youth Clubs and Play Groups etc. The car park was built to service it (but it now serves the whole site). The land on which the Hall stands is leased from the Keys Academy Trust.

St Sebastian's C of E School and Nursery

This Church of England Primary School is part of the Keys Academy Trust. The school has very close links with the Church (providing accommodation for Sunday School) and teaches pupils from the age of 3 to 11. The playground is used as an overspill car park on Sundays.

St Sebastian's Lodge

This detached house is held in trust by the church to be used as accommodation for a church worker, or otherwise let. This is currently vacant and we are seeking new tenants.

Church Yard

The Church is surrounded by the church yard which has been formally closed and adopted by Wokingham Borough Council. The church yard includes a Commonwealth War Graves area which is the site for the annual Remembrance day commemoration.

The Church has a direct link with the adjacent Council Cemetery, which is used for local burials.

St Sebastian's Vicarage

The Vicarage is located to the east of the church and the main entrance is via a long private drive from Nine Mile Ride, which curves to the right round the garden to the front of the house. There is space for several cars in the area in front of the house as well as a detached single garage at the end of the drive. To the left of the house, there is a gate next to the garage into the churchyard, so it is a very short walk from the vicarage to the church. To the right of the drive, in front of the house is the Council Cemetery so it is very secluded. There is a large garden with tall mature trees and bushes which is mainly laid to lawn.

The house is a spacious 4 bed roomed detached house of brick construction, double glazed and has been decorated apart from 3 of the 4 bedrooms. The Diocese has done some major refurbishment, including a complete refitting of the kitchen, utility room, downstairs cloakroom and bathroom which includes a separate shower cubical as well as a bath. They have also replaced all the flooring, so all living areas have new carpets.

On the ground floor there are 3 spacious reception rooms, the study has a lot of fitted shelving, currently there is a desk, chair and filing cabinet in the room. The living room has an open fire and patio doors to the garden and there is a large dining room near to the kitchen and utility room, both of which have been completely refitted by the Diocese, and another area where the new gas condensing wall hung boiler is located, and there is a door to the outside, in addition, there is a downstairs cloakroom which has been refitted including a new radiator. Upstairs there are 4 double bedrooms all with fitted wardrobes and the bathroom, which has been completely refitted with a bath, separate shower unit toilet and hand basin.

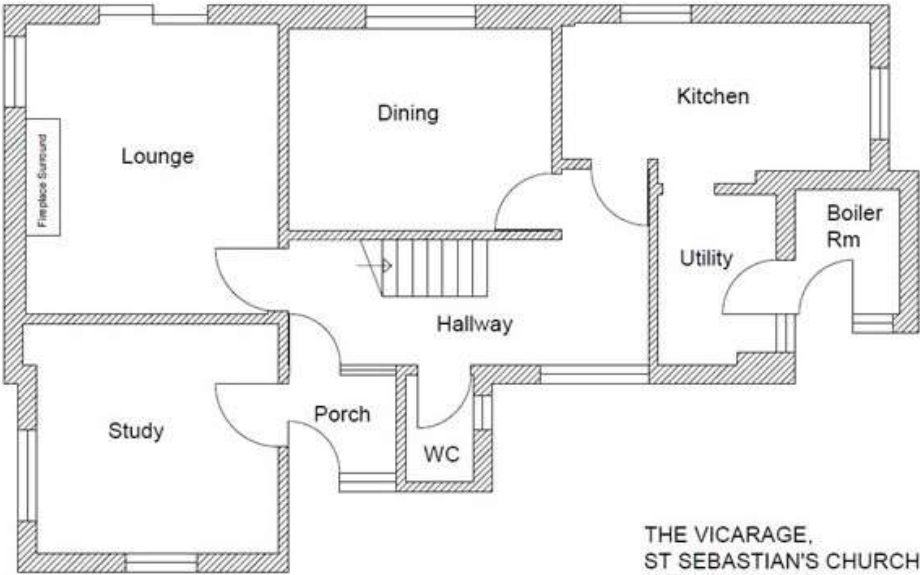
Copied below are some photos taken when the pre-vacancy inspection took place on 3 February 2022.

Photos:

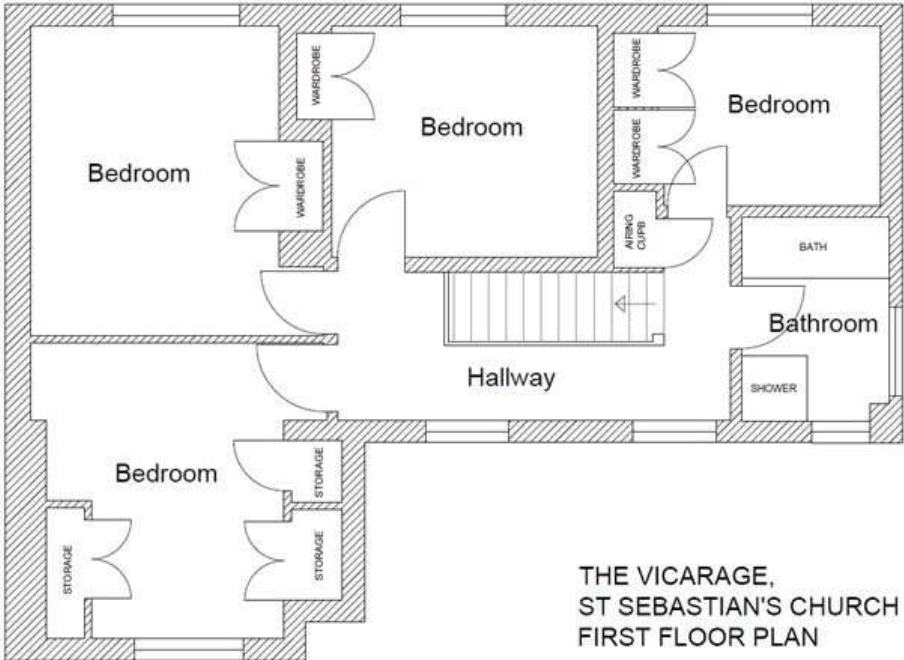




Floor Plans of the Vicarage

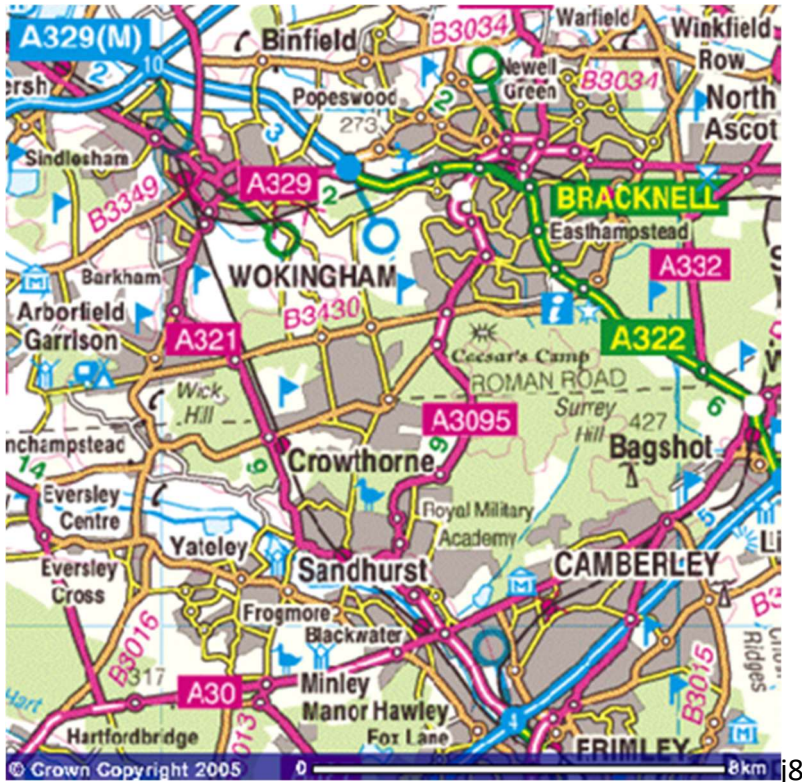


THE VICARAGE,
ST SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



THE VICARAGE,
ST SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Appendix 1 - The Setting



Crowthorne setting

Crowthorne is located in the Royal County of Berkshire close to the Hampshire and Surrey Borders. The village of Crowthorne is split between the Unitary Authorities of Bracknell Forest Borough and Wokingham Borough and even those who live in the Wokingham borough will tell you that they actually live in Crowthorne.

There are few retail facilities within the parish – a small parade of shops in the east (Greenwood Road), a craft village and a Garden centre to the north.

Nearby Crowthorne High Street is a popular and valuable shopping centre. It has two supermarkets (co-op and Lidl), lots of cafes, a hardware shop, a butcher, a cobbler, several hairdressers, and lots of charity shops.- There is a recreation ground with adjacent hall and a Parish Hall in Heath Hill Road.

Originally part of the parish of All Saints Wokingham, “Wokingham Without” comprised those parts of Wokingham “outside” (or without) the town forming a west facing crescent. Over time, land was transferred to other parishes with just the area south of Wokingham remaining in the parish today. At the end of the 19th Century the area comprised 3 small hamlets within part of Windsor Forest – Heathlands (or St Sebastian’s, where the church is located), Gardeners Green and Holme Green with a population c400, the majority residing in the northern part of the parish employed in forestry or agricultural work.

Good History link on WWPC website

The church was built in 1864 to provide a place of worship for a group of heathen people, known as “Broomdashers” because of their occupation. They were converted to Christianity from their pagan worship on peat altars with idols of broken crockery. In the early part of the 20th Century, Irish Travellers became first frequent visitors to the area, and then ‘settlers’. Today there is a significant traveller population, particularly in the area near the Church. At the eastern end of the Parish, the Pinewood Sanitorium (1905?) was built for London sufferers of Tuberculosis; during the Second World War this became a Canadian Air Force Hospital (accounting for many of the War Graves in our Cemetery) and 40 years ago became Pinewood Leisure Centre, home to an extraordinary mix of clubs and societies (Allotments, Judo, Gym, Model Railway, Boxing etc.) operated by Wokingham Without Parish council. The southern area of the parish expanded rapidly as an extension of Crowthorne village in the second half of the 20th century due to its proximity to the nearby technology and defence industries in Bracknell / Farnborough, to Heathrow Airport and London in general. In 1967, the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) was established in the east of the parish, including a substantial road testing track. By the mid 1990s the population was around 8500, with 80%+ living in the southern sub urban area of the parish.

The majority of people in the southern part of the parish, say that they live in “Crowthorne” (rather than “Wokingham Without”) as that is where the majority of local shops, schools etc. are located. That said, people arriving in the 1950s/60s are fiercely proud of the fact that they live in Wokingham Borough and not Bracknell Forest Borough. To further complicate matters, the TRL part of the parish was transferred from St Michael’s Easthampstead (Bracknell) to St Sebastian’s in 2012

In the last 5 years, the parish has undergone a further step-wise expansion with major housing developments in the east of the parish delivering c500 new house occupations at Oakham Park (116) and the development of the old TRL site and track (350 currently occupied). Plans for the TRL site (“Buckler’s Park”) include a further 786 homes (1,100 homes total), a new primary school (to be associated with the Crowthorne Cof E school in our neighbouring parish), a community hub, a new pub and a substantial country park, Buckler’s Forest.



To the immediate north of the parish (currently green fields / farmland within All Saints Wokingham parish), a further 1,800 houses are planned, a new distributor road (part opened), a further primary school, community centre and neighbourhood centre. To the west (St James Finchampstead and Arborfield) the redevelopment of the former Arborfield Garrison is slated for a further 3,500 homes.

A small Jewish Foundation of learning and physically disabled residents -close to the church at Ravenswood (part of the Norwood Jewish Care Charity) was established during the 1950s. The pressures of modern care requirements mean that the number of residents continues to fall and with consultation on the future of this site underway, further residential housing is a distinct possibility.

Wokingham / Crowthorne is a desirable place to live (in a recent survey, Wokingham was judged the 8th best place in the country) and in common with most of the SE, is literally in the middle of major house building expansion.

Transport

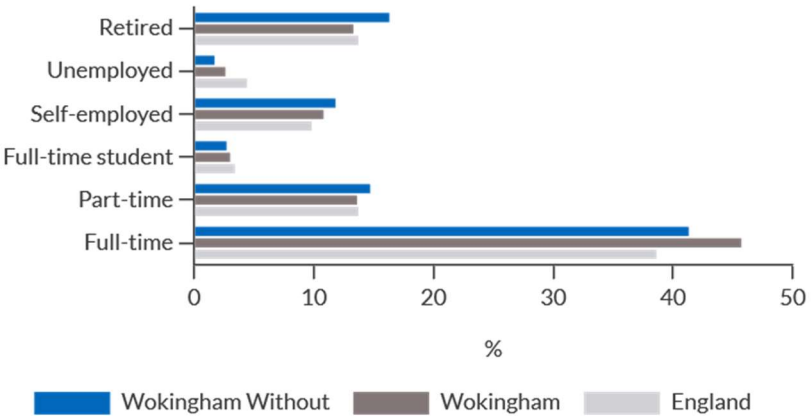
There is easy access to Reading (via the A329(M) and both the M3 and the M4).

There is a regular 30 minute bus service through the east part of the parish via Old Wokingham Road and the High Street which serves Bracknell to the North, Camberley to the South and the extremely popular major M&S/Tesco site at 'The Meadows' in Sandhurst between the two.

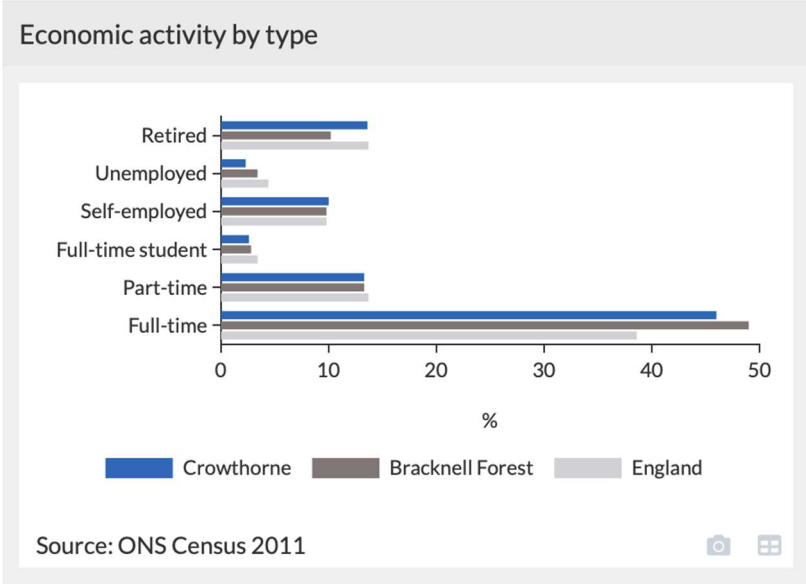
Crowthorne station is set a bit apart from the main urban areas in Crowthorne. Trains run a regular, direct route to Reading, Guildford and Gatwick Airport, with connections to London and the rest of the country. Nearby Wokingham, Bracknell and Martins Heron stations are on the main line into London Waterloo.

Heathrow and Gatwick airports can be reached 'within an hour' by car or public transport.

Social Geography



The parish of St Sebastian’s Wokingham Without covers an area of 3.7 square miles; 60% is urban.



The population of the ecclesiastical Parish of St Sebastian is approximately 8000, approx 53% of the total Crowthorne population. (The rest is in the ecclesiastical Parish of St John the Baptist, Crowthorne, with a population of 7,300).

94% are White, 90% were born in the UK, 66% give their religion as Christian. ¹

72% are economically active.

88% of property is owned and there are few low or social rent properties (2%)-

80% of the people in Crowthorne are in the least deprived (10th decile) IMD category, with 20% in the 4th Decile, and the most deprived neighbourhood area in the whole of Wokingham Borough. This is the area surrounding church where a high proportion of Irish travellers, eastern European farm workers and other low income groups live in the mobile home parks on Nine Mile Ride. The distance from local services (shops etc.) puts this area in the most deprived decile for “Barriers to Services” in England.

The area is very dependent on car usage (over 80% use car/motorbike to commute to work), with one of the highest levels of car ownership in England (95% of households have access to a car or van).

Crime levels are very low (28.3 per 1000 people per annum)

Schools

Wokingham Without / Crowthorne is well served by schools:

- St Sebastian's Church of England Primary School and Nursery with 132 pupils is situated in Nine Mile Ride. The school is part of the Keys Academy Trust.
- Hatch Ride Primary School with 206 pupils aged 4 – 11 years situated on Hatch Ride, Crowthorne. The school is part of The Corvus Learning Trust.
- Oaklands Junior and Oaklands Infants School and Nursery with 197 pupils from 3-11 years. The school is part of The Corvus Learning Trust.
- Edgbarrow School, a secondary school which has recently been designated as a Business and Enterprise College. It is regularly oversubscribed.
- Wellington College, a renowned public school, which has a chapel with chaplain.
- There are other schools in the area; St John the Baptist Church of England Primary (aka "Crowthorne CofE"), which is attached to the neighbouring parish, plus various private primary/prep schools including, Our Lady's Roman Catholic Primary, Holme Grange School. Just outside the parish are two independent schools: Luckley School and Ludgrove School.
- Ranelagh, a Church of England Academy Comprehensive School, in Bracknell and jointly serves the deaneries of Bracknell and Sonning. It has an above average educational standard as published in the Government league tables.

Colleges of Further Education are located in neighbouring towns. These include Farnborough College of Technology, Farnborough 6th Form College, Bracknell and Wokingham College, Reading College of Art and Design and Reading College of Technology. There are a number of universities within commuting distance from Crowthorne. These include the University of Reading, University of Surrey in Guildford, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Thames Valley University in Slough, as well as the London Universities.

Healthcare

Crowthorne has two group medical practices comprising doctors, nurses and other health care professionals.

There are private dental practices in Crowthorne with some taking National Health patients.

The village has a selection of nursing and rest homes accommodating both elderly and psychiatric residents as well as sheltered accommodation and small care homes for people with learning disabilities. Within our parish, a new care home Buckler's Lodge opened on the former TRL site in January 2022.

The area is served by two main hospitals, Frimley Park (approximately 6 miles away), and the Royal Berkshire in Reading. There is also an urgent care facility at Brants Bridge in Bracknell

Appendix 2

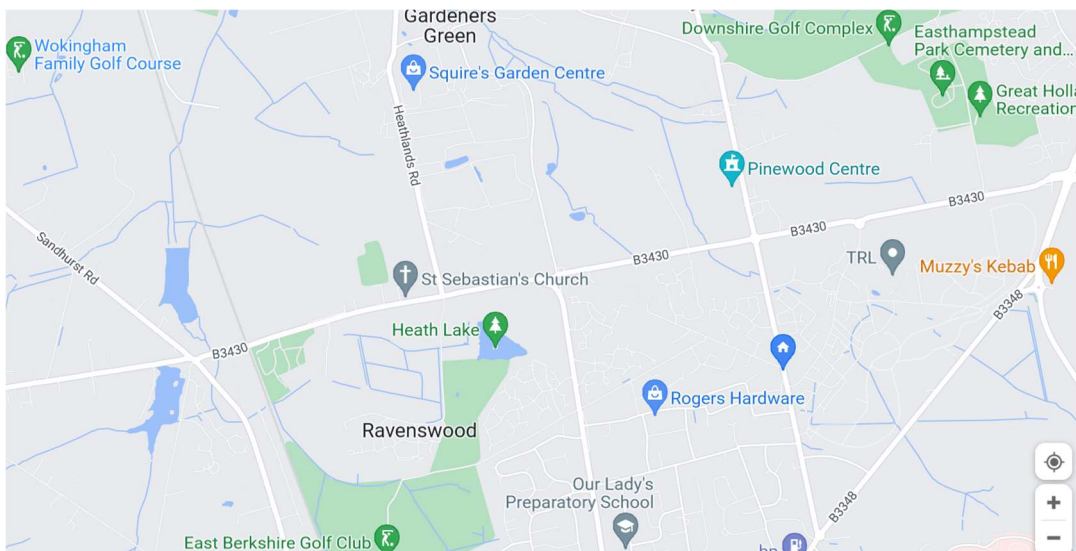
Our Community

The Parish

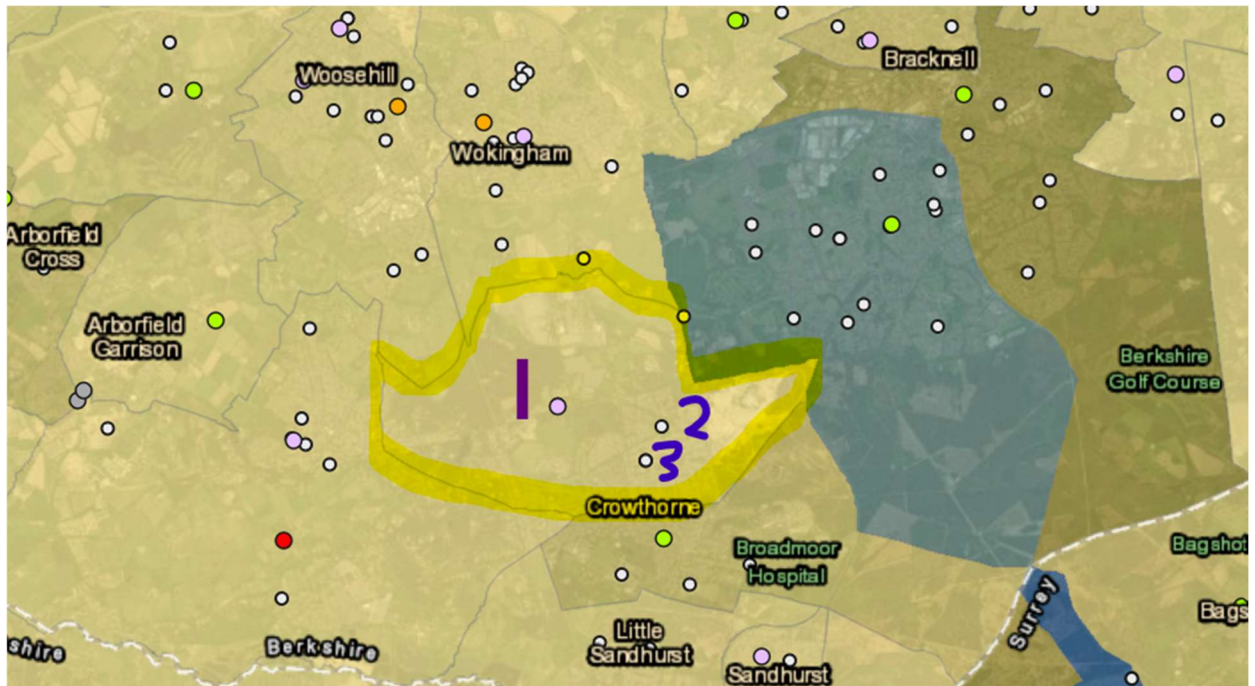
The village of Crowthorne is split down the middle into two parishes. The area to the North of Dukes Ride is within the Parish of St Sebastian's. This is further complicated because the historic boundary runs slightly to the north of Duke's Ride, causing a lot of confusion when deciding whether people live within the Parish, [Resolved by asking whether you have a wheelie bin to collect your rubbish (Bracknell Forest) or a blue bag (Wokingham)!]-

'South' of Dukes Ride is the Parish of Crowthorne which falls under Bracknell Forest; the 'north' of Crowthorne lies in the Parish of Wokingham Without under Wokingham Borough, plus the former TRL Site (Buckler's Park) which falls under Bracknell Forest.

However, many people from the village outside the church parish boundary attend St John's because they identify it as their Parish church.



The parish is in Sonning Deanery in the Archdeaconry of Berkshire which is in the Diocese of Oxford.



1 = Church of St Sebastians and St Sebastian's School

2 = Hatch Ride School

3 = Oaklands Junior and Oaklands Infant School

Appendix 3

Life of the Church

Our Church Services

Our worship style may be seen in our service pattern:

1st Sunday in the month - All Age Worship and Communion

2nd Sunday in the month - Worship and Word plus The Base (Concurrent, family focussed, 'Fresh expressions' outreach service)

3rd Sunday in the month - Worship and Communion

4th Sunday in the month - Worship and Word (Usually with a Mission focus) plus The Base

5th Sunday in the month - Worship and Healing

All regular main services have a live band. All communion services have prayer ministry concurrent with the distribution of the communion.

Support for worship

Welcome Team	We have a number of people who provide the welcome for worshippers at the main Sunday service.
Intercessors	We have a team of lay intercessors who share the weekly intercessions at the main Sunday service.
Readers	We have a team of people who read the Old and New Testament readings in the main Sunday Service.
Flower Arranging	We have a team of people who provide flowers each week.

Up Until Covid and interregnum.... Sunday 8:00, weekly; now twice monthly

Up Until Covid and interregnum.... Wednesday 10:00, weekly; now twice monthly

Up until COVID and the Interregnum we also held Messy church, Jubilee Club, Sunday Classic.

The Base

The Base is one of the congregations of St Sebastian's community. Every other Sunday the Base runs alongside the main church service at 10am. We meet in the school hall. The Base came about in response to the need of providing an informal service that catered for the needs of young families. When it started four years ago the idea was to aim the content of the service at the children and parents could also come along. This quickly progressed as the Parents also developed relationships with our great volunteer team; and now the service is focused at the family as a whole. The Base has seen many new families become connected to the church and it has also been a great platform for people in the community who have not volunteered before to get involved. During the service there is coffee and snacks through-out, all age worship music, craft activity, team games, Bible story clips, adult discussion time, talk and interactive prayers. The main congregation usually come and join us for the last song and refreshments at the end. The Base has been a great platform to invite families from St. Sebastian's school into the community. Marv and Amy spend a lot of time during the week meeting with people one on one from the Base, and a men's and women's social time has become a regular occurrence more recently.



Little Angels

Little Angels is the church's toddler group and coffee morning. It currently runs bi-weekly, but is looking to become weekly due to demand. The group meets on a Friday in the Church Hall from 10-11:30am. There is plenty of fun for the little angels, with toys, crafts, snacks, play dough, singing time, story time and bubbles. While giving a safe, fun, free space for the toddlers to learn about God, we see the ministry as being as much for the Parents as the little people. We have a great team of mixed ages and background who have all been brilliant at drawing alongside and encouraging the parents that come. And we have become known as the toddler group with the best cakes in town, thanks to the lovely Joan.



Youth Group

Friday Night Live is the youth group that currently run bi-weekly on a Friday night from 7-8:30pm. It is for young people in school years 7-11. The youth group was relaunched after the last lockdown, as many of the church youth had moved away to university during this time. It has been great to welcome new faces from many of the local schools. There is usually between 15-20 young people at youth group. The youth group is set up for outreach. It's very lively with lots of games, sports, hot chocolates, chill out corner and a 15 minute slot at the end to look at youth culture issues with a biblical perspective. Some of the young people now come along to the Base and also help serve on the volunteer team.



Schools Work

We have the great opportunity to go into St Sebastian's school lots. Marv is a regular in the assemblies and Amy runs a collective worship club with the children, so that they play a part in leading their school services. We are also involved in the CU and prayer space at Holme Grange School. Marv does assemblies in Oakland's primary school. We partner with Wellington College and their citizenship program, which means a group of students comes and helps with any jobs that need doing.

Share

During lock down we got involved with this local charity that provides veg and food boxes to people in the local community. Every Wednesday we collect boxes from the distribution centre and put in them in the church hall to be collected by the people we have linked with. We deliver some to people who struggle to get out. This has been a great way to connect further with our friends who live on the mobile home park. The vision of Share is to both combat food waste and help families with shopping bills.

Missions

As a church we are committed to giving 10% of our non specific donations to mission, as Jesus instructed his followers. We aim to divide this about 50:50 between mission in the UK and overseas mission. Additionally, the congregation of St Sebastian's Church will make specific collections for particular causes, all of which is donated to the named charity.

We support a number of smaller organisations, all of which have some personal contact with St Sebastian's Church; we try to ensure that there are links with the charities we support so that we can receive feedback and understand the difference that our giving makes to the people we support.

We also support a number of larger organisations, such as the local [Foodbank](#), [Tearfund](#), [Toybox](#), [Open Doors](#), [The Children's Society](#).

Most months we host a 'Mission Slot', inviting a representative of one of our supported charities to come along and provide an update on their work.

Pastoral Group

The Pastoral Care Team are a group of volunteers who aim to support parishioners in practical ways when during times of crisis as well as provide ongoing support to parishioners in need of day to support for tasks they are unable to do themselves.

The areas of support include; lifts to hospital or Doctors' appointments; heavy shopping, transport to stations.

We also provide meals for people that become ill or have recently given birth.

The team also provide contact and support for those who are isolated at home.

During Covid lockdown there was a system put in place to regularly make contact with congregation members living alone to make sure they were engaged and had contact with other people during the long period of isolation.

The Pastoral care team are developing collaboration with the Youth & Family team to make sure we can help resource some of the great work that Marvin and Amy are doing in reaching out to the local community.

Music Worship

We are blessed with a number of enthusiastic and talented music groups who support worship on a rota basis both in the main church and in the Base. We annually convene a choir for the Carol Service and we have the support of the St Sebastian's Band for Remembrance Sunday and other occasions such as the recent Harvest Festival.

Prayer

Prayer Ministry Team

The prayer ministry team presently consists of fourteen members, ten of whom serve regularly, offering prayer ministry (PM) at the bimonthly communion services and at the 5th Sunday healing services (in January, May and October). In addition, there are four people who do not want to be called on regularly but are happy to step in if needed on the day. At each communion service, our aim is to have three sets of two people offering PM. Two sets at the front near the communion table and one set at the back, usually near the front door. The prayer ministry team leaders feel supported by the commitment and faithfulness of the prayer ministry team. The Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns put a stop to 'in person' prayer ministry for around 18 months. During that time, about eight people left the team, some of those because they left St Sebastian's. Looking ahead, we plan to run a short Prayer Ministry course to encourage and equip more people in the church to be part of this wonderful ministry and for existing members to be refreshed.

Zoom Prayers

'Zoom Prayers' is the weekly church prayer meeting, held on zoom /online on Mondays at 7.30pm - 8.30pm. The prayer meeting moved online due to the Covid lockdowns and we have continued with this format as many regulars find it more convenient. We have a core group of twelve, although numbers vary from week to week. We've often held monthly mission focus prayer meetings, praying for charities we support as a church, including Yeldall Manor, Open Doors Ministries, Univida and Mityana Charity. The prayer meeting is facilitated by one of the group. Our constant prayer is that we come to spend time in God's presence, thanking Him and interceding for the things He has placed on our hearts and minds, for our church, local community, country and world. Looking ahead, there are plans to investigate the possibility of a weekly in-person prayer meeting in addition to Zoom prayers e.g. Sunday mornings before 10am service.

Healing Service -5th Sunday of the month (January/ May /October)

The Prayer Ministry Team leaders plan these services together. Healing services were held in October 2021 and January 2022. In May we held a special service of Healing & Reconciliation, which was appreciated and well attended.

Pastoral Prayer support

The Prayer Ministry Team leaders have visited people in their homes to pray for/with them. This has tended to come about following prayer ministry during communion or at coffee time.

Intercessions at the Sunday 10am service

There is a growing number of volunteers who lead our intercessions at the Sunday morning 10am service.

Hearts for Prayer booklet

There is a deep belief in the power of prayer and particularly praying bible verses over people and situations. During Lent 2022, our Prayer Leadership team put together (with the Church Administrator's help!) a little booklet to help us pray the word of God over the children in our lives.

Small Groups

We have a number of Home Groups who meet for bible study, prayer, mutual support and some independent study. We aim to ensure that every member of the congregation who is so inclined has access to a convenient small group which generally meet in people's houses.

Prayer Groups

The life of the parish is supported by prayer. There is a rota of intercessors for our weekly 10.00am service.

Courses

Prior to COVID we intermittently ran Alpha, Marriage, Surviving the Break-up and Lent courses. We have just initiated a CBS (Community Bible Study) Bible study course which is being well received and attended, implying a desire for more of this type of ministry.

Our response to the Covid 19 pandemic

Moving to an 'online church' with limited technical skills or experience of online working, was a huge challenge undertaken by a small number of technical people in the church with a larger number of contributors of content for the services themselves.

The Ministry Team and other volunteers pre-recorded Sunday Services to be watched online at the time of the normal Sunday service or later; this was posted on YouTube.

The Pastoral care team kept in touch with a large number of the congregation just checking in and helping as needed.

Parish business was largely conducted online and this continues with the online Prayer meeting on a Monday evening.

We have to decide how to respond to the benefits and drawbacks of doing church online, now and in the future.

Appendix 4

Organisation and Finance

The Church is governed by the Parochial Church Council, which currently has 15 members. It met 7 times during 2021/22.

At our last APCM (May 2022) we had 152 members on our electoral roll.

Finance - Background

2021 Actual Results

For the first time in many years in **2021** we had a significant **Deficit of £ 26,700**

2022 Forecast Results

When setting our Budget in January, the PCC expected 2022 to be a very challenging year financially. The PCC budgeted that our income would continue to fall as a result of:

- the disruption caused by the Pandemic reducing the activities of the church
- the fact that we were entering an interregnum following our vicar being unwell since March 2020, during which time he was only able to work part time or was off sick for significant periods.
- the uncertain economic climate and expected high inflation meaning that some regular givers would have to reduce their monthly donations.

In addition, it was expected inflationary pressures would cause an increase in our running costs, particularly the cost of gas and electricity for our three buildings. During 2022, the PCC reviewed all items of expenditure and found cost savings in several areas.

The PCC was able to increase its income from the Church Hall. However, during the year, it became clear that our Planned Giving Income would be even lower than expected.

These factors have resulted in a Forecast Deficit for 2022 of £46,900, to be funded from Reserves. This forecast is after paying our full Parish Share and maintaining our Missionary Giving at 10% of income. We have been using our Reserves to fund our Deficits and our reserves have fallen from £113,600 at the end of 2020 to a forecast of £40,000 at the end of 2022.

Budgeting and Reserves policy

The PCC policy is to operate at a small annual Surplus, to maintain our Missionary Giving at 10% of income, and to pay our full Parish Share.

It has been PCC policy, where practicable, to maintain a minimum balance of free reserves (net current assets) equating to approximately two month's general fund payments or £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow.

Autumn Appeal

The PCC and Leadership team carefully considered how we could maintain our free Reserves with a further deficit expected in 2023, and still meet our current level of commitments through 2023. They have recognised that this must involve gifts from the existing committed members of our congregation.

Being such committed members, they have agreed jointly to pledge to make one off gifts and to review their future monthly giving. The target prayerfully set to be raised from the PCC and Leadership Team in one off gifts is **£34,000**.

In addition, during the Autumn, the situation will be explained to the Congregation to encourage them to increase their giving.

Looking forward to 2023

Before the Autumn Appeal for increased Planned Giving from 2023, we are forecasting a Deficit for 2023 of £51,000. The increased deficit is caused largely by higher Gas and Electricity prices.

We are hopeful that the Autumn Appeal will reduce both the deficit for 2023 and will add at least £34,000 to the Reserves in 2022.

Deficits and Reserves

As at 1 st October 2022	Deficits	Reserves
31st Dec 2022 Forecast		£40,000
Autumn Appeal (one off Gifts)		£34,000
31st Dec 2022		£74,000
Forecast 2023 (Before Appeal)	£51,000	
31st Dec 2023 Forecast		£23,000

Our Stewardship Guidelines

Biblical Principles

We strive to base our stewardship on biblical principles – the following verses have informed our thinking in these testing times

– 1 Chronicles 29 v14, *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand”*.

Malachi 3 v 10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room for it”

2 Corinthians 9 v7 “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”

Financial administration

A Finance Committee appointed by the PCC has responsibility for oversight of routine financial administration, annual budgeting, and the preparation of financial reports. We have a part time Finance Officer working one morning a week.

Fabric

St Sebastian’s has a strong Fabric Committee dedicated to maintaining the fabric of our site and buildings. The team meets regularly and consists of five willing volunteers who review any fabric-related issues and schedule repairs as required. The detailed Quinquennial Report forms the basis of on-going work, but other items from replacing tap washers through to repairing the electrics, and everything in between, ensure that the team is kept busy.

Most recently, the team has handled repairs to the heating system, to the external woodwork, and much more besides. The Lodge is our current concern, and once resolved, we know there will be no shortage of other tasks, mainly in the way of routine maintenance rather than major projects.

As a result of the team's efforts, the fabric of St Sebastian’s church and other on-site buildings is generally kept in good condition.

Appendix 5

Draft notes from the PCC Vision Day 15/1/22

These notes are the transcriptions of the post-it notes, roughly organised, along with some notes about the stories shared and some initial reflections and questions. The order of the bullet points is not significant.

Discovering the best of “what is”

What is valued at St Seb’s, what do we want to thank God for, what is done well, where have we seen the church at its most Christ-like?

- *Base – child and family oriented and friendly service attracts new families/youth*
- *Base – social educative outward looking intergenerational; reach & accessibility gateway to faith journey*
- *Base Little Angels Family Ministry*
- *Little Angels: Family Ministry*
- *Messy Church*
- *New Youth group – parents WhatsApp volunteering to help*
- *Potential outreach to all ages*
- *Prayerfulness*
- *Prayer Ministry*
- *Prayer centred decision making & planning*
- *Sense of the presence of God*
- *Listening to God; We listen to God’s voice*
- *Openness to the holy spirit, prayerfulness through decisions*
- *Quantity/quality of prayer in team meetings & discernment*
- *Endurance/resilience of church during last 2 years “ Still Here”*
- *Generational ministry (Jubilee Club/Songs of Praise)*
- *People from non-church backgrounds feel welcome*
- *Welcoming environment*
- *Carol Singing, Christingle on caravan park (Going out)*
- *Open to doing new things. The church is behind you no matter what*
- *Crossing division*
- *Near empty church (Carol Service recording) was church most alive recently*
- *Funding Mission abroad e.g. training nurses in Nepal*
- *Grace/peace/calm in the atmosphere*

- *Encouraging as a church: Marv thinks church really encourages their work*
- *Worship – singing in harmony*
- *Singing - music Worship in church*
- *Courses: Alpha, Marriage, Lent*
- *Community, New Wine*
- *Intergenerational team work*
- *Distributing 10x food packs to needy families via “Share” Wokingham*
- *Church -school connection*
- *Willingness to volunteer*
- *Hose volunteers who serve*
- *Packed church made more alive in Christ*
- *Church cares for one another as close family*

The stories we told:

- *A Mum joining a group and finding a “family”*
- *The youth group parents expressing their appreciation on the Whatsapp group.*
- *Christingles and carol singing at the trailer park*
- *Food share*
- *Mission committee connecting with nurses in Nepal*
- *The role of prayer in the leadership team*

Discovering the best of “what might be”

Imagining that it is three years after the appointment of a new incumbent. What does it look and feel like? What is different? What challenges have been overcome?

- *Income exceeds expenditure so we can tithe 20%*
- *20% tithing is the norm (sorts the finances)*
- *Legacy to fund God’s plan*
- *Joined the Base and main service – one community!*
- *Church hall has become a community hub*
- *Connecting hub – to each other -to local community & other churches*
- *Monthly gathering @ TRL commhub (church too small)*
- *Community: TRL, coffee@St Seb’s; extend food bank parcels*

- *Buildings fit for purpose*
- *Extend the Church and make it a more flexible place*
- *Church hall knocked down and church extended*
- *Church hall extended to expand activities Yr 1*
- *Church hall has gone – new building*
- *Parish centre has been redesigned*
- *Community hub has been built*
- *Re-ordering of church*
- *We have mastered technology and our equipment and expertise is “fit for purpose”*
- *Parking solved*
- *Lodge has been sold – redeveloped*
- *Planted church @Buckler’s Park*
- *Curate living in Buckler’s Park to support plant*
- *We are evermore outward facing*
- *Loving each other well – real unity in the body of Christ through the bond of peace*
- *Loved shared church relationships draws others into the love of God*
- *We as St Seb’s not isolated*
- *Young peeps in music gps, PCC*
- *Young musicians, young people in leadership in PCC*
- *We have a lot more families in church*
- *Lots of volunteers*
- *Full church 50% new since 3 years*
- *Multiple services on Sun 8am + Base*
- *Large numbers of casual attenders becoming committed to Christ*
- *Services – Holy Spirit, great worship*
- *More than 1 clergy: curate?*
- *New vicar has brought fresh vision and growth*
- *External facing: marriage course; Surviving break up; Debt; known in the community*

Appendix 6

Our Parish Mission Statement

This arose out of Prayer Workshops on "Listening to God" in which many from the church took part in January to March 2000. As we asked "What is God saying to the church?" a number of common themes emerged. These are summed up by the main themes of Isaiah 58, and represent a call to a faith that is worked out in practical love, evangelism, and Christ-centred community.

Based on Isaiah 58, we believe that God is calling us as a church to:

"Release the Oppressed" Bring the healing of Jesus to those trapped in body, mind, or spirit

"...to set the oppressed free and to break every yoke." (Isaiah 58:6)

"Reach Out to the Lost and the Needy" Bring the love and forgiveness of Jesus to all those in need

"... to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter..." (Isaiah 58:7)

"Create Community"

Create 'holy space' in a stressed world, becoming a community where all are welcome, and where Jesus is honoured

"...call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honourable, and... honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please" (Isaiah 58:13-14)

"be led by Jesus"

Recognise that all that we do is to be led by Jesus and rooted in prayer and in God's word to us in the Bible

"The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame." (Isaiah 58:11 - 12)

The Parish Vision

We recognise that we are far from being that kind of church at the moment, but the CROSS vision is both a reminder of Jesus' words, and a goal towards which we aim in our life as a church.

Based on John 17, this is our vision of the kind of church that God is calling us to become:

Christ-centred

Not "Jesus and...", but Jesus alone at the centre of our lives.

"...glory has come to me through them.." (John 17:10)

Righteous

God-directed living, thinking, and speaking.

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17)

One

Not "I've won!" - but "We are one."

"..that they may be one as we are one..." (John 17:22)

Sent

A serving church rather than a consumer church.

"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them..." (John 17:18)

Spirit-filled

All God's people using God's gifts to the full.

"...so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them..." (John 17:13)

Appendix 7

Questionnaire Detailed Feedback

Overall the picture is that as a church we are a caring, loving and prayerful community with worship, family and pastoral care at its heart.

The top five areas of importance, felt to be maintained, for our congregation are:

Main church services, Worship, Children and Youth Work, Pastoral Care and The Base.

We have many groups at the moment which serve different parts of our community and allow an intergenerational teaching. The view is that these should continue, with the main service being a combination of some Liturgy and free form worship.

Opportunities for Development

We reached out to our congregation and community to ask what they think we could improve on or what they would like to see within our church. These can be broken down into three main areas – individuals, congregation, community.

For individuals:

- Training members to be effective spiritual leaders rather than holders of a particular job function.
- More in depth bible study/discipleship courses to help Christian's mature in their faith and be bolder.
- More spirit lead ministry, allowing more time for the Holy Spirit to move and speak during the service.
- Regular invitations to visiting speakers with different ministries and spiritual gifting so we hear different voices and are encouraged and built up.
- In service mission focus, testimonies shared.

For the congregation:

- Enable the generations coming together under one roof and supporting each other. At the moment, they are too separate. Get people of all ages together.
- Try to link the Main Church and the Base congregations better to avoid their becoming two separate and potentially competing entities. We should always be one family of God, knowing and supporting one another.
- Rebuild the main church congregation.
- Encourage the teenagers to attend church on a Sunday. Maybe we should once a month have an evening service which is then followed by youth club with pizza

- Review where the growth of the church is. It certainly appears that increasing number of people are coming to the Base and Little Angels. This indicates that less formal approach to services are preferred by families particularly children.
- Somehow we need to become more flexible and inclusive and adapt more of our main services so that we can accommodate people attending from the Base and they feel comfortable and accepted - including lively children.
- Be more forward thinking in the usual services to allow more of a cross over of the base.

For the community:

- We need to reach out to more people in our parish and our school community.
- More community based activities.
- Continue to strengthen links with the school.
- Reach out more actively and practically outside the 4 walls of the church to the many needs in our local area.
- Greater "pooling of resources" with other local churches so that we are **Kingdom Building** rather than just building our own church.
- Strengthen the "community feel" of St. Sebastian's and to build a hub of activities in the church and its diverse buildings. Consider regular groups and one-off workshops centred around people's diverse interests (and for different age groups, kids, youth, young adults & older adults), e.g. sewing/knitting/crochet, crafts (for children and adults!), dance, music, drama, sports (e.g. a running club or football for adults & children), CV advice for young people.

Overall the church should feel like a hub, where people come together regularly to meet up, learn from each other, do exciting things together, are inspired, joyful and worshipful.

Moving Forward

The community of St Sebastian's are really looking forward to welcoming a new vicar. They feel it would be useful if the vicar had experience of being:

- a people person
- able to relate to all ages
- interested in families and young people
- a good communicator
- relatable
- spiritual
- prayerful
- worshipful
- supportive
- able to guide through teaching
- nurturing to develop a congregation
- encouraging
- creative
- a shepherd for the Lord

Appendix 8

Churches Together in Crowthorne



Churches together in Crowthorne (CTC) is an association of local churches from Crowthorne and Finchampstead, who come together to serve and bless our area and its people in the name of Jesus Christ. We produce combined events, such as the Good Friday “Walk of Witness” and a Christmas light service supporting Christmas late night shopping.

But our aim is to spend most of our energies working together on projects that build God’s Kingdom and benefit our village, for example setting up the Crowthorne Foodbank, running summer activities for children, welcoming new residents, cooperating in sharing Christian faith with local care homes, and setting up teams to do assemblies in local schools.

During the pandemic, a number of our regular activities went ‘online’ and enabled new initiatives to reach a wider audience ([“The Crowthorne Blessing”](#) video being a particular highlight).

There are five churches in Crowthorne:

- St John the Baptist Parish Church
- Crowthorne Methodist Church
- Crowthorne Baptist Church
- Holy Ghost Catholic Church
- The Vineyard meets in Edgbarrow School

St James Parish Church at Finchampstead and St Mary and St John’s that meets in Gorse Ride School are also a member of Churches Together in Crowthorne.

Relations are good with all the Churches, and we work well together.

Appendix 9

Safeguarding and Health and Safety

St Sebastian's church has two Safeguarding Lead Officers - a primary lead and a deputy. In general one takes responsibility for adult activity and the other for children. St Sebastian's approach to safeguarding is driven by the Church of England's publication "Parish Safeguarding Handbook - Promoting a Safer Church". Through our Safeguarding Policy, we aim to:

- promote a safer environment and culture.
- safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- respond to those that may pose a present risk to others

It is our practice that, while there are named individuals with specific roles, all have a responsibility to look out for each other.

Health and Safety

Building a positive health and safety culture In recent years St Sebastian's church has adopted a more robust approach to managing health and safety on site and in particular in relation to its three buildings - the church, the Parish Office/ rooms etc and the Church Hall. Our Health & Safety Policy is annually reviewed, and a wide-ranging assortment of risk assessments are carried out in relation to these three buildings and the activities which take place there. Risk assessments are considered 'consultative' and 'live' documents, whereby the process draws key personnel into 'taking ownership' for their activities; those responsible draw up their own risk assessment(s) under the guidance of the church's Health and Safety Officer. Accordingly every onsite activity prioritises due care for the health, safety and wellbeing of all our congregation, employees and visitors to the site.

Compliance and good practice The PCC receives detailed updates/reports on current and relevant health and safety matters. The reports are also underpinned by the actions of the Fabric and Environment Committee which oversees the condition of the buildings and associated risks, and undertakes repairs as appropriate. A pragmatic and 'common sense' approach is adopted, which enables a positive health and safety culture to be sustained, which in turn results in legal compliance and good practice.

COVID-19 A particularly important development was the formation of the Covid Crisis Committee during the pandemic. In the context of ensuring the congregation's health, safety and wellbeing, its purpose was to formulate St Sebastian's approach to managing its Covid-related processes, protocols and controls, and to ensure that these were appropriate, suitable and well-measured. The Committee's work was shared with the PCC as appropriate. Its work was inevitably ad hoc and largely responsive to the government's legislation during the pandemic in addition to guidance provided by the Church of England. The Committee's is currently adopting a monitoring role (locally and nationally) for the time being pending any potential resurgence of Covid-19 in the future

Appendix 10

Role Description

Details of the Post:

Role title:	Vicar of St Sebastian's Church Wokingham Without
Type of role:	Full time stipendiary
Name of Benefice:	St Sebastian's Church Wokingham Without
Episcopal area:	Diocese of Oxford
Deanery:	Sonning
Archdeanery:	Berkshire
Conditions of service:	This role falls within the Clergy Terms of Service formally known as Common Tenure. The Archdeacon of Berkshire is the person designated by the Bishop of Oxford to issue the Statement of Particulars for the post holder.
Key contact for Clergy Terms of service:	Archdeacon of Berkshire
Accountability:	<p>To the Bishops of Reading and Oxford via the Archdeacon and Associate Archdeacon and the Area Dean of Sonning. Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church. Whilst, as an office holder, the individual is expected to lead and prioritise work in line with the purpose of the role, they are encouraged to inform the Archdeacon and Churchwardens about any issues exceptional or otherwise that have the potential to affect ongoing delivery of ministry.</p> <p>The PCC has registered with the Charity Commission and enjoys charitable status; members of the PCC are also charity trustees and have regard to the law and regulations pertaining to registered charities.</p>

Reading Episcopal Area (Archdeaconry of Berkshire) - Bishop Olivia Graham

The deaneries of the Reading episcopal area are Bracknell, Bradfield, Maidenhead & Windsor, Newbury, Reading and Sonning

St Sebastian's Wokingham Without is in Sonning Deanery which has 24 churches and the Area Dean of Sonning is Fr Richard Lamey. The Deanery is focused on the Diocesan common vision by supporting each congregation in the Deanery to emerge confidently and boldly from the pandemic, secure and refreshed in its vision and calling and clear on where it can find the resources and ideas it needs to fulfil its vocation of being the Church of God for the community.
<https://sonningdeanery.com/>

During the vacancy, St Sebastian's has become much more aware of the deanery and appreciated their practical and prayerful support.

Oxford Diocese - Bishop the Rt Revd Dr. Steven Croft

The Diocese of Oxford is a Church of England diocese that forms part of the Province of Canterbury. Broadly speaking it is 2200 square miles covering the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. There are 606 parishes with 808 churches, more than any other diocese in the Church of England. It is divided into four smaller 'episcopal areas' Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester and Reading, each overseen by their own area bishop.

The Diocese of Oxford is serious about a common vision and vocation – to be a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world – more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/>

Wider context

The Diocese of Oxford and the Archdeaconry of Berkshire

Working alongside the Bishop of Oxford we have three Area Bishops who exercise considerable strategic and pastoral oversight for their areas. The Bishop of Reading is the Rt Revd Olivia Graham who has been the Area Bishop since 2019. Stephen Pullin is the Berkshire archdeacon, Liz Jackson is the Associate Archdeacon, and they make up your area team with Ian MacDonald, Discipleship Enabler (Youth specialism), Nicholas Cheeseman, ADO and Rhodri Bowen, Parish Development Adviser.

Missional focuses will be different according to the local setting, but the diocesan focus areas, widely shared amongst churches, schools and chaplaincies are:

- Environmental action
- Christian formation and discipleship
- Growing new congregations
- Schools, children and young people
- Addressing poverty and inequality

These priorities are being supported centrally by training, conferences, workshops, and much more.

The diocese is inviting benefices and their clergy to share a vision rather than demanding a response. It wants all its clergy to be motivated by hope rather than being driven by anxiety, and thereby to flourish in their ministry.

It is hoped that clergy appointed into the Archdeaconry of Berkshire will want to commit to this vision and encourage their benefices to share in becoming a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world.

Sonning Deanery Plan September 2021 to July 2022

John 21:15 'Peter said to Jesus, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said: 'Feed my lambs' and we are challenged to

- rebuild and deepen relationships that have become tenuous as we have been unable to meet in person
- discern what is vital and sustainable and seek what God invites us to be part of in a post Covid world
- deliver high quality pastoral care in an age of increased isolation and loneliness so we can remember how to be together.

Local Context

St Sebastian's are looking for a vicar who will value our Charismatic Evangelical tradition, and can work with us to revitalise the church which has experienced the effects of the pandemic whilst having a vicar who has been ill.

We reached out to our congregation/community to ask what they would like in a new vicar. We summarised the responses earlier in this document.

We would like our new vicar to help us to:

- lead and engage in outreach activities to benefit our communities and creating opportunities to share the Gospel
- provide a path for seekers and new Christians to gain a greater understanding of Jesus
- regain our focus – provide renewed leadership
- release the energy and enthusiasm in the congregation to build a thriving, vibrant church
- further strengthen the links with all stakeholders, particularly St Sebastian's School; the staff, pupils and parents. Several church members are on the Governing Body including the Chair of Governors
- consider how we adapt our buildings to allow us more freedom to worship and serve the community in different ways
- expand our reach into the newly created housing development of Buckler's Park which is part of the Parish
- continue to share Jesus with people in our local communities in a relevant way
- review our vision with the church and with new leadership help set fresh priorities for the future
- develop our environmental and sustainability activities and ethos

We would like our new vicar to help us overcome the challenges we face, such as:

- to work with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to create a Safe Church for everyone, offering personal leadership, commitment, ambition and drive in a vital area of Church and community life
- integrating the Base into the wider church.
- reconnecting with those who have disconnected during the pandemic.
- building links with the new part of the parish at Buckler's Park – how do we address this opportunity to share Jesus with new people?
- discerning the needs of different groups of people in Wokingham Without and Crowthorne.
- building on what has been good and precious to our current congregation in order to respond fully to the needs of our wider community.
- giving. Like most churches we are struggling for finance. We have always paid our parish share. In 2021 we had a deficit for the first time in many years. This year we again face using our Reserves to cover a deficit. While we are taking steps to increase our income, in 2023 we still face having to fund a significant deficit from Reserves.

Role purpose and key responsibilities

General:

- A. To exercise the cure of souls shared with the bishop in this benefice in collaboration with colleagues, including the praying of the Daily Office, the administration of the sacraments and preaching.
- B. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy (as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy) and other relevant legislation including
 - a. bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making him known to those in your care.
 - b. instructing the parishioners in the Christian faith.
 - c. preparing candidates for baptism and confirmation.
 - d. visiting the parishioners of the benefice, particularly those who are sick and infirm.
 - e. providing spiritual counsel and advice.
 - f. consulting with the Parochial Church Council on matters of general concern and importance to the benefice.
 - g. bringing the needs of the world before God in intercession.
 - h. calling your hearers to repentance and declaring in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.

- i. blessing people in God's name.
 - j. preparing people for their death.
 - k. discerning and fostering the gifts of all God's people.
 - l. being faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us.
- C. To share in the wider work of the deanery and diocese as appropriate, for the building up of the whole Body of Christ.

Key responsibilities specific to the local situation

Mission and Outreach:

- Focus on young families and those in need in Wokingham Without and Crowthorne, doing whatever we can to care and serve them within and beyond the church building.
- Review our Mission and vision with new leadership helping set fresh priorities for the future.
- Identify and implement ways to increase the depth of personal discipleship and spirituality for our community.
- Expand our sense of fellowship and grow our church community while being inclusive of our existing congregation.
- Develop our environmental and sustainability activities and ethos.
- Delivering our mission in the Church primary school through assemblies, support at events, church services, the incumbent to be a Governor and lay appointments as Governors.

Leadership and collaborative working:

- Leading our parish with confidence and clarity.
- Manage and support the work of the Youth and Family workers, Church Administrators, Church Wardens, the PCC and the Team Leaders
- Working collaboratively and affirmingly with the Leadership Team and volunteers
- Committed to Working with our local Christian churches e.g. Churches Together in Crowthorne and the Deanery of Sonning.
- Providing Vision and lead the church Vision planning and delivery
- Identifying and developing skills and gifts of others in Ministry.

Worship and preaching:

- To lead the congregation in our current worship patterns.
- Identify new opportunities and possibilities for worship and preaching to reach the unchurched.
- Enabling and encouraging a diverse range of preaching styles.

Family and Youth Work

- Supporting the work of our Family and Youth Workers to integrate this mission more fully into the wider church

Stewardship and benefice organisation:

- Oversee our Stewardship Programme and Support it with biblical teaching to enable a spirit of generosity to grow among us.

Personal development and spirituality:

- Produce a structured framework to identify and develop skills and work out what you want to achieve and how to achieve it looking at your strengths and weaknesses, your life circumstances, your sense of spirituality, and then deciding for yourself what your next steps might be.
- The key responsibilities listed above may be supported by long and short-term objectives to be agreed between the post holder and the Archdeacon and Churchwardens.

Other responsibilities

Participate in continuing Ministerial Development (CMD), via Diocese of Oxford.

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/continuing-ministerial-development.php>

Carry out any other duties and responsibilities as required in line with the benefice needs.

Take care for their wellbeing including health and safety and building a good repertoire of spiritual and psychological strategies.

Benefice Summary

Benefice: St Sebastian's Church Wokingham Without

Patron(s): The Bishop of Oxford

PCC: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Sebastian's Church Wokingham Without (registered charity number 1139933) At present 15 elected members. Deanery Synod, 4 elected members.

Churchwardens: 2

LLMs: 3

Ministers: 1 Vicar (the incumbent)

Benefice paid staff: Two Part time Children and Youth Workers, One Part time Church Administrator, One Part time Finance Administrator

Benefice unpaid staff/ volunteers (numbers) 40+ regular volunteers in most aspects of church life

Buildings: Church, Parish Centre and Church Hall. Vicarage

Churchyard(s): 1 closed. Managed and maintained by Wokingham Borough Council

Church Tradition: Charismatic Evangelical Anglican but with a variety of worship styles

Pastoral Reorganisation proposals: None

Key Contacts for the Role

Groups & committees

- The PCC
- Deanery Synod
- Deanery Pastoral Committee
- Churches Together in Crowthorne

In the benefice

- Churchwardens
- Ministerial Colleagues and Team Leaders
- Head teachers of local schools

Support structures

- Area Dean
- Area Bishop
- Archdeacon & Associate Archdeacon
- Staff at The Diocesan Office with key responsibilities for various aspects of supporting parish ministry

This role description is issued alongside and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The Ordinal
- The Canons of the Church of England
- Guidance for the Professional Conduct of Clergy
- Bishop's Licence
- Statement of Particulars issued to the officeholder on successful appointment
- Diocesan Clergy Handbook
- Parish Profile
- Any objectives discussed and agreed between the post holder and the supervising minister

Role description signed off by:

Rev'd Canon Liz Jackson, Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire

Appendix 11

Person Specification

Qualifications/Training

Essential

Ordained priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognises.

Have satisfactorily completed Initial Ministerial Education.

Enhanced DBS clearance.

Driving licence.

Desirable

Have already been in charge of a Parish operating in the charismatic evangelical tradition

Experience

Essential

is comfortable operating in the Charismatic Evangelical tradition.

Engagement with and pastoral support for people of all ages.

Priestly ministry involving vision setting and team development.

Line management experience.

Leading mature and thoughtful all age worship.

Desirable

Experience of doing forms of church in creative, engaging and imaginative ways.

Active engagement with local schools.

Experience with Eco Church development [Eco Church - A Rocha International](#)

Knowledge/Skills and Competencies

Essential

Ability to preach in a variety of styles and formats to a broad range of listeners with varying outlooks, ages and understanding.

Ability to identify and respond to opportunities for mission.

Ability to make and build on links with individuals and community organisations whose involvement with the Church is limited.

Leadership skills including the ability to motivate, inspire and effectively coordinate volunteers.

Deep Biblical knowledge.

Good communication skills.

Is able to manage change confidently.

Ability to positively engage with people from new housing.

Desirable

Collaborative working especially with volunteers and other churches.

Ability to manage resources effectively.

Has experience of planting churches.

General Attributes

Essential

Places Jesus at the centre of everything that is done.

Evidence of a deep prayer life and ability to draw on a wide range of spiritual resources.

Will be part of the community of the church and the community at large.

IT competent.

Enthusiasm for spreading the word of God and is able to bring people to Faith in Jesus Christ.

To work with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to create a Safe Church for everyone, offering personal leadership, commitment, ambition and drive in a vital area of Church and community life

Will enable church members to fulfil their God-given potential and callings.

Desirable

A passion for learning and personal development.

Is full of ideas which can feed into our Vision and the energy to help us achieve it.

Has a heart for families.

Can look after the existing congregation and develop ways for new people to engage with the Church.

Is open to new ideas and opportunities and prepared to take some risks.

Is Social media literate.

Appendix 12

Useful Weblinks

1. Parish website: <https://www.stsebschurch.org.uk/>
2. Parish YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrRCyEalEatOemA3QSN4bvQ>
3. Deanery website: <https://sonningdeanery.com/>
4. Oxford Diocese website: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/>
5. Wokingham Without Parish Council – The Civil Parish of Wokingham Without: wokinghamwithout-pc.gov.uk.
6. Wokingham Borough Council: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/>
7. St. Sebastian's Church of England Primary School and Nursery - Home (st-sebastians.wokingham.sch.uk)
8. Hatch Ride Primary School (<https://www.hatchride.wokingham.sch.uk/>)
9. Oaklands Junior School (oaklandsjunior-school.org.uk)
10. Edgbarrow Secondary School: <https://www.edgbarrowschool.co.uk/>
11. Wellington College: <https://wellingtoncollege.org.uk>
12. Crowthorne GP surgeries: <https://newwokinghamroadsurgery.nhs.uk/>

