



Ministry on
the Border

- a place of
opportunity
and
surprises



Contents

- Foreword - The Right Reverend Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury 3
- Welcome to Oswestry Deanery 3
- Where are we and who are we? 4
- The post and what we have to offer 5
- The parishes working together 6
- The challenge 8
- Feed and lead the flock 10
- A good shepherd 11
- The Parishes:
 - St Michael the Archangel, Llanyblodwel 12
 - St Agatha, Llanymynech 13
 - St Philip and St James, Morton 15
 - All Saints, Trefonen 18
- Message from the Acting Archdeacon and Prayer 20



Forest Church, Morton



After Morning Worship, Trefonen

Foreword from Bishop Sarah

The Diocese of Lichfield is a diverse, rich and exciting place to live and work. It lies at the heart of England, not just geographically but culturally and socially. There are areas of spectacular natural beauty that sit beside the legacy of centuries of industry and commerce, areas of urban deprivation and rural poverty beside places of aspiration, growth and hope.



What unites us as a Diocese is the invitation to “Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad”. St Chad, the first Bishop of Lichfield, challenges us to humble, faithful and courageous mission in this part of the Midlands and in this generation. We are committed to the mutual flourishing of faithful Anglicans of all traditions, and to welcoming and honouring people of all backgrounds. We are inspired by our Diocesan Vision:

“As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as people of hope.”

We have identified three priorities as we seek to realise this vision more fully: to developing discipleship, encouraging vocation and inspiring evangelism. These priorities help us focus our work in all the varied forms of Christian life in the Diocese, in our parishes, Fresh Expressions, Schools, Chaplaincies and the Cathedral. Our ‘Shaping for Mission’ strategic framework can be explored on our diocesan website: [Shaping for Mission - Diocese of Lichfield \(anglican.org\)](http://anglican.org)

The priest appointed to the post of Rector in the Border Benefice would be accepting an invitation to join us in this pilgrimage of faith. We will do all we can to support you to grow as a disciple, deepen your vocation and be a confident bearer of the good news of Jesus Christ so that you are equipped and ready to do the same for those with whom you are called to share in ministry. Is God calling you to join us?

†Sarah Shrewsbury

Welcome to Oswestry Deanery....

The churches in the Border Benefice are a very integral part of the deanery, particularly during the Shaping for Mission process where regular meetings were held to discuss, pray through and process what things we felt God was calling us to focus on.

The previous Rural Dean with Bishop Sarah and Acting Archdeacon Jo chaired an early vacancy meeting, at which there was very good attendance from across all four churches within an impressive level of energy and enthusiasm in the room in relation to the future of the parishes and their willingness to engage in mission and outreach in the communities.



Of course, like many churches, there are challenges for them to face in terms of the upkeep of buildings and the reality of reducing and ageing congregations, but there is a real willingness to explore new ways of being church and discern what God may be calling them to explore in the future.

In terms of what is already running in the parishes: they have a dementia friendly focus, including a drop in café and a forest church which is going really well. Parishes are exploring different ways of being church and how to engage with the local community.

I am really encouraged by what is bubbling up in the parishes and sense that they need a Priest who will encourage them to explore further ways to prayerfully engage with the wider community. I do hope that you will consider whether God is calling you to be this person, and to come and work with us in Oswestry Deanery.

The Deanery itself is beginning a new chapter, working more closely with the neighbouring Deanery of Ellesmere. We see this as an exciting new step and look forward to seeing where this takes us.

Revd Preb. Linda Cox.

Where are we and who are we?

Tucked away in the wonderful countryside of the north-west corner of Shropshire, where England meets Wales, we are a Benefice of four parishes:

- Llanyblodwel – St Michael the Archangel
- Llanymynech – St Agatha
- Morton – St Philip and St James
- Trefonen – All Saints



Brought together almost 20 years ago, we chose to be known as the Border Group of Parishes to reflect our location: mainly in Shropshire, but partly in Powys. The Benefice sits at the very western edge of the Diocese of Lichfield, in the Oswestry Deanery.

Despite their names, Llanyblodwel and Trefonen are, like Morton, wholly in England, whereas around half of Llanymynech is in Wales, including half its church yard! Llanymynech is the largest parish by population (1983, 2021 Census), followed by Trefonen (1392), Morton (1032) and Llanyblodwel (665). Our nearest towns are Oswestry, a couple of miles north of Trefonen village, Welshpool, some 10 miles south of Llanymynech, and Shrewsbury, which is just over half an hour's drive away towards the south-east. Although there are railway stations at Welshpool and Gobowen (3 miles north of Oswestry), local travel and transport is overwhelmingly by road. However, we are within easy reach of main centres of communication: Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool.



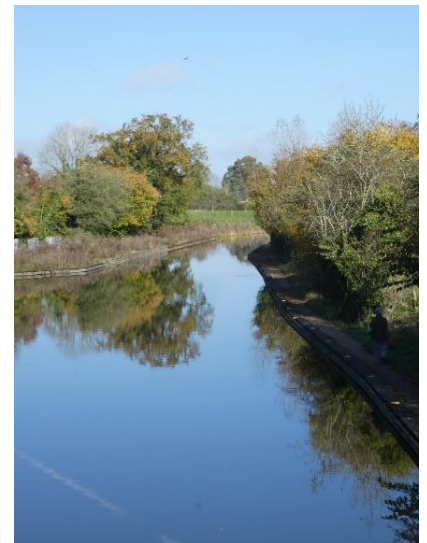
Llanymynech Rocks

Shropshire is renowned for being the most complex geological area of Europe; that is reflected in our Benefice. Much of Morton in the east lies on the edge of the North Shropshire plain and part of Llanymynech is on a lowland area beside the River Vyrnwy. The central part of the Benefice is dominated by north to south ridges and uplands, which end abruptly – and spectacularly - in the cliffs and old quarries at Llanymynech Rocks. To the west the landscape rolls away with distant views of the Welsh hills. Offa's Dyke and its associated long-distance trail run through the middle of the Benefice bringing hundreds of walkers to our area every year.

There are a host of sites of industrial archaeological interest – canals, quarries, coal mines, lime kilns, water mills and some now disused railways of more recent times. There is the fully restored Hoffman Lime Kiln at the Heritage Site in Llanymynech. There are several SSSIs, woods and forests, and amazing flora and fauna, reflecting the area's essentially rural nature.

Opportunities for leisure include walking, golf, narrow boats, canoeing and country sports.

Details of the features of each parish are to be found in the individual profiles that follow.



Canal at Crickheath

The post and what we have to offer

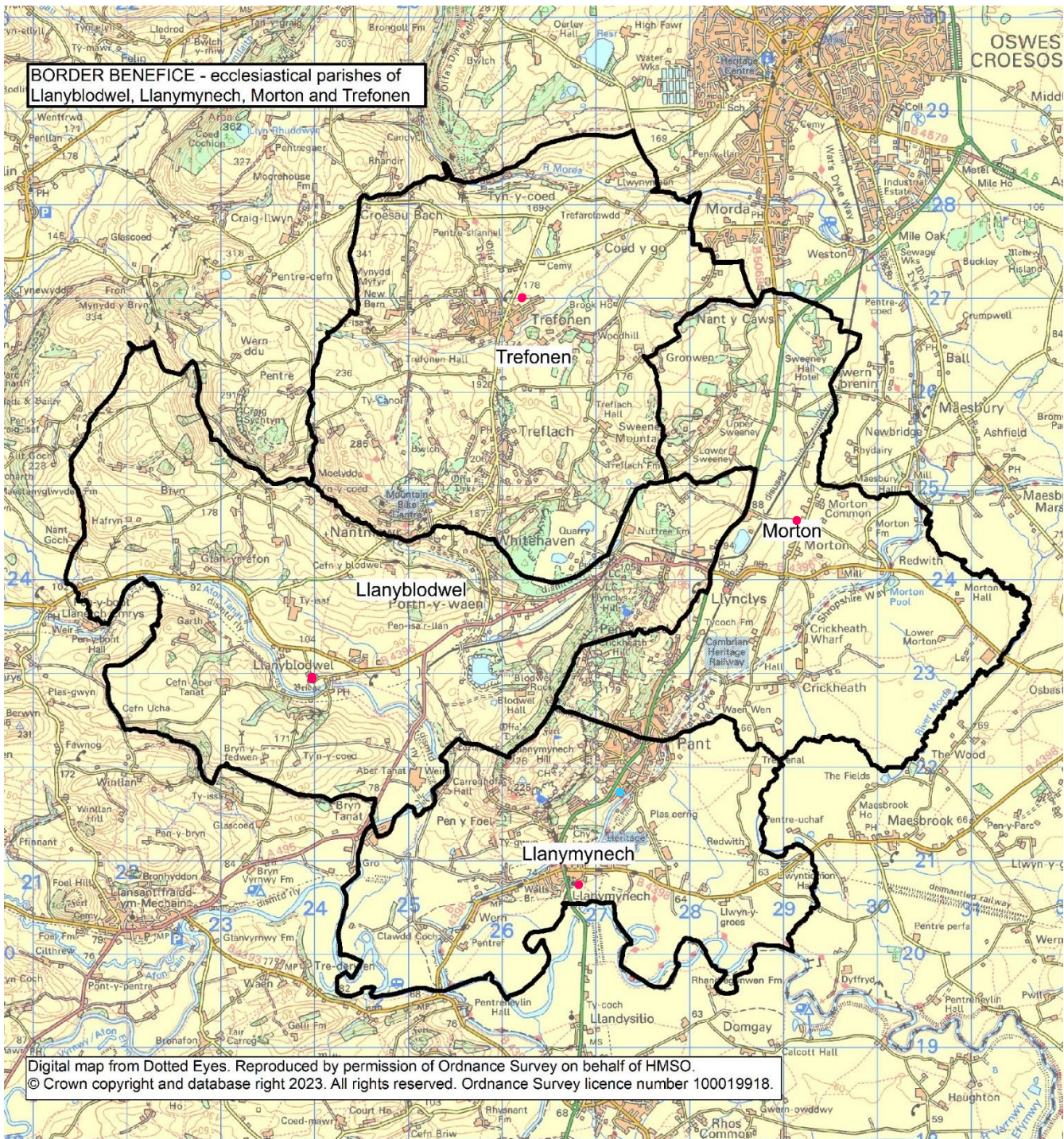
We are seeking a full time incumbent, covering the four parishes. We offer an attractive, four-bedroom home, with uplifting views. The Rectory's lounge has patio doors leading to an extensive outside area. The house is in good order and undergoing further upgrading.



View from the Rectory

We offer financial support for an annual retreat. We expect you to take all your days off and your full annual leave entitlement, in accordance with diocesan guidelines. Parish expenses will be reimbursed in full, in line with national guidelines. There is a Benefice Administrator, engaged for 15 hours per week

We will also support you with ongoing prayer and pastoral care.



● Churches ● Rectory

The parishes working together

This Benefice Profile demonstrates the varied character of our churches and communities, their settings, local situation, and different styles of tradition and worship. Inevitably it is not always easy to bring the villages in a multi-parish rural benefice together into a common life. However, considerable progress has been made in recent years and there is an ongoing and real sense of our ‘unity in diversity’. This is, of course, work in progress and we look forward to our new incumbent helping us continue to develop our life together as a Body of Christ.

We are very fortunate to have two lay readers who work across the Benefice and there are appointed lay worship leaders in each parish, some of whom also work across the Benefice. They provide us with invaluable help and leadership with Sunday services and occasional offices. They currently take all the Sunday services apart from Holy Communion.

Across the Benefice there is a wide range of styles of worship. There are Benefice policies covering occasional offices such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. We use a Benefice-wide series of service booklets, all based on Common Worship, and some leaders devise Services of the Word. Separate booklets provide the liturgy for Holy Communion and cover seasonal variations as well as Ordinary Time. These more modern forms of liturgy are supplemented by BCP services in some of our churches when deemed appropriate. However, for all-age worship our churches have their individual ideas on format and content.



There is a service in each of the four churches every Sunday morning, apart from when there is a fifth Sunday in the month. For some years we have had a single Benefice Service on that Sunday, hosted by each church in turn and with a variety of themes. Each church has a Holy Communion service once a month during the vacancy, at which visiting clergy officiate and lay worship leaders assist. Previously, there were two Holy Communion services each month in each church, with Morning Worship or Family Service on the other Sundays. The Rector led two services each Sunday and the Lay Readers and Lay Worship Leaders covered the others.

2023 Statistics for Mission

	Electoral Roll	USA adult	USA <16	Easter	Christmas	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
Llanbyddwel	47	15	2	61	29	3	0	2
Llanymynech	49	11	0	11	70	2	1	7
Morton	59	12	0	30	54	3	1	3
Trefonen	54	23	0	32	50	3	0	9

The churchwardens from the four parishes have a joint committee, which meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest or policy. The objective is to promote and coordinate Benefice-wide working and joint activities.

The part-time Benefice Administrator currently works at the Parish Office in All Saints' church in Trefonen. Among many other things, she deals with all enquiries relating to baptisms, weddings and funerals. Whilst each PCC has its own treasurer, there is also a Benefice Treasurer. We can report that the parishes are self-sufficient and all paying the Common Fund to the Diocese

During the vacancy, the PCC Lay Chairs have been meeting very regularly and it is through the PCCs that discussions about the future, vision and aspirations, have been driven. One item on the agendas at the moment is the Lichfield Diocese's Shaping for Mission initiative and its Strategic Framework for 2024 – 2030.



The Border Benefice is committed to safeguarding and each parish has adopted relevant policies and procedures. They all have a Safeguarding Officer.

Parishes are working on their Dementia Friendly action plans and responding to the Eco Aware initiative. Oswestry's Food Bank is widely supported.

Why not take a look at our website: www.borderparishes.org.uk or have a look around the Benefice on Google Earth?

The challenge – working in the power of the Spirit



For at least the past ten years the Benefice churches have been learning to work and grow together. Many people are mindful of the Benefice in discussion and consultation and join in the joint services. There have been Benefice activities, such as the reading of Mark's Gospel and discussion at the beginning of Year B. We sense the commitment to develop the Benefice identity and make it a thriving and powerful force. However, we recognise the individuality of the parishes, each with its long-established traditions and activities – and PCC.

Benefice Lent lunch

One very common theme emerging in all the parish discussions about our aspirations is the acutely felt desire to grow our contact and relationships with children and younger people. Increasingly it is understood that this is not primarily measured by counting the number at the Sunday service. We need to be working outside the four walls of the church. We are extremely fortunate to have three primary schools across the Benefice, two of them being Church of England Voluntary Controlled, and the third, under the present headship, is involved with the local church. While there are already established activities, such as gifts for all Year 6 leavers, and specific acts of worship, this is an area of huge opportunity and potential growth. There is in the Oswestry Churches Together area an excellent Schools' Christian Worker, supported by one of our churches. And we know that children have families and through them we have access to younger adults! These are largely untapped opportunities.



Another common concern across the parishes is the wish to look outwards and have contact with the local communities, both within the village and area context and also with other worship and faith groups. Our rural situation places the churches within what are vibrant, caring and active communities; people know one another and there is a lot going on. Church members are very involved and the sick, bereaved, housebound and challenged are not without support and friends. However, there is now a very real sense that we are not really bringing Christ's presence into these relationships. In addition, as ours are usually the only church buildings in the villages, we have active members of our congregations who do not have an Anglican background. We think we should be more outward reaching here and in our links with the Deanery and Churches Together. Guidance in doing this is needed.



One of our community cafés

We are strongly committed to developing our Christian understanding and witness beyond our Sunday worship. We already have a variety of ways of doing this: house and home groups, occasional services and discussion, specific courses, prayer groups. PCC consideration of the Diocese's *Shaping for Mission - A Strategic Framework 2024 – 2030* has provoked much discussion and reflection and even some agreement about priorities and possibilities! We can see both the challenge and the potential in the direction of travel outlined. However, we know that little will really happen without leadership, drive and probably the occasional smile and laugh.



While our rural situation brings huge benefits, it also presents some challenges. Importantly we need to give more thought to communication, in its various forms. Physical contact between the churches, or even getting to a parish church, is frequently a problem. Public transport is very poor and people depend on cars and lifts. This constitutes a real barrier to participation in worship, encounter and activity. In addition, keeping people informed, and ensuring information is delivered in a timely manner, does not work if there is too much reliance on the Internet. Significant numbers of our congregations do not have access to IT or are hesitant to use it. The three parish magazines play an important role. Addressing these issues is important.

A Harvest lunch for the village

In order to tackle these challenges, we need someone to:



Feed and lead the flock

Tell

- ❖ Guide the PCCs in implementing their commitment to the Diocesan Strategic Framework for Mission, a real priority.
- ❖ Become familiar with the key people in the primary schools and expect to be involved in the governance of the Church Controlled schools. Identify activities and people to be developed and require plans for implementation.

Teach

- ❖ Give priority to spiritual development, creating strategies and plans to enable appropriately varied and targeted activities.
- ❖ Encourage and guide the establishment of house groups and opportunities for people to explore and develop their faith in secure and supportive environments.
- ❖ Continue the development of different forms of worship and liturgy, both in Sunday worship and occasional activities, seeking engagement and participation.

Tend

- ❖ Identify teams as appropriate for different tasks and projects. Ensure they are trained and have terms of reference to bring clarity to their endeavours. Ensure ongoing review, support and evaluation. Develop a team for the lay worship leaders. Develop, widen and promote Pastoral Support teams.
- ❖ Have oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures, as handled by the Safeguarding Officers.
- ❖ Become familiar with different community groups within the parishes and seek personal links with a cross-section.

Transform

- ❖ Help church members to develop prayerful, reflective approaches to discussion and outreach and to become agents for change.
- ❖ Support the PCCs in their decisions to be Dementia Friendly churches.
- ❖ Encourage endeavours to challenge violence and work for peace.

Treasure

- ❖ Encourage and promote the commitment to being Eco Friendly churches.
- ❖ Promote exploration of ways to safeguard the integrity of creation and to address environmental concerns.
- ❖ Help us make the most of the benefits and potential of our amazing geographical situation.





On the Moelydd

And in order to lead and feed the flock we need:

A good shepherd

Essentially, if you feel drawn to our rural parishes, in an area where most people develop permanent roots when they arrive, then we would love to meet you. We all know that incumbents are never short of work and it is a demanding calling. We have all the expected demands of ministry: services, occasional offices, spiritual and pastoral development, PCC meetings, outreach activities, school commitments.....and having four parishes ensures there is always variety in approach, activity and ideas! However, we feel the following are particularly important:



Do you share our concern to be engaged and active beyond the four walls of the churches?

Can you plant ideas and guide us in their development and implementation?

Do you preach with due succinctness and engagingly to a variety of congregations and age groups?

Can you handle change, challenge and support in a tactful and Christian manner?

Can you assemble and develop teams?

Are you organised, managing your time and identifying priorities to cope with your workload?

Will you manage a regular pattern of rest and recuperation and access appropriate personal and spiritual support?

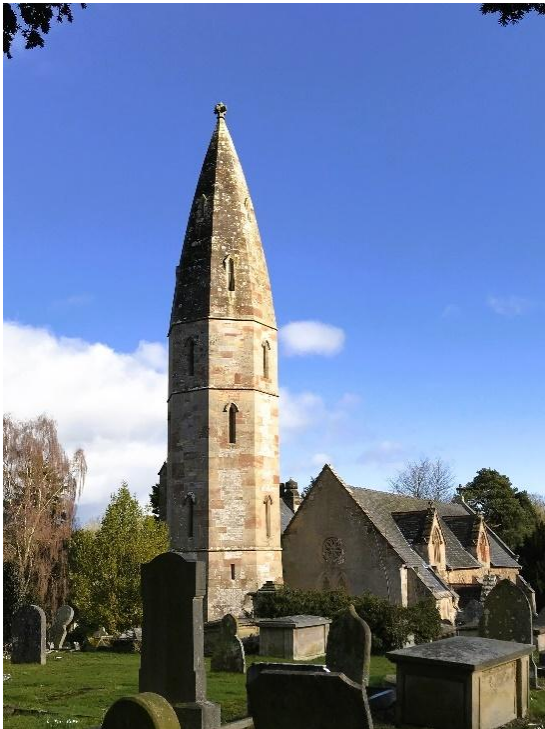
Shall we share laughter?

The Parishes

Llanyblodwel - St Michael the Archangel

The Community

The Parish of St. Michael the Archangel, situated six miles south of Oswestry and at the lower end of the beautiful Tanat valley between Offa's Dyke and the Welsh border, covers the main community of Llanyblodwel with hamlets at Abertanat, Bryn, Llyncllys and Porth-y-Waen.



The parish is scattered and has a history of agriculture and quarrying. It relies today principally on farming but many travel to work in Oswestry and beyond. The population has remained stable at around 800 for at least two centuries. Despite its scattered nature the parish is a thriving community with a modern village hall. The renowned Porth-y-Waen Silver Band is based in the village at its own purpose-built hall.

St Michael's Church

Standing on one of the earliest holy sites in Britain, circa 1700 years old, the basis of the current Church was Norman built in around 1160 AD with additional phases undertaken during the 15th century. Between 1846 and 1855 St Michael's Church underwent considerable redevelopment under the hand of the Reverend John Parker, a gifted artist, botanist, engineer and enthusiastic amateur architect. He was well-travelled and modelled our unusual octagonal tower on that of Freiburg Minster in southern Germany. He also built a vicarage and school and schoolhouse in similar Gothic style.

Since 2009, the PCC has raised in excess of £300,000 allowing re-roofing, guttering replacement and repairs to the building fabric and tower. The interior of the building has been cleaned and conserved and a kitchen and accessible toilet provided.

The old, closed churchyard is under the care of the secular Parish Council; the active burial ground is adjacent. There is a small car-park and parishioners form working parties to carry out maintenance and other work in the grounds. We have a good organ, a piano and an excellent organist.

Finance

The PCC strives to maintain financial strength in the Church accounts with a view to paying their parish share, supporting the ministry and maintaining the building. We work with an annual budget and have a fund-raising committee.



Worship

We are ever open to new ideas and practices reaching beyond our current pattern of worship: an 11.00am Communion on the 1st Sunday; a 9.00am Communion using the 1662 prayer book on the 3rd Sunday; and Common Worship at 11.00am on the remaining Sundays. Any month with a fifth Sunday brings us a Benefice service

We benefit from a lay reader and two worship leaders. Other members of the congregation participate in the services, reading lessons and assisting with communion. The setting and the ambience within our remarkable church also lends itself to private prayer and meditation: to quote from our visitors' book "a special place of peace and tranquillity". A prayer group meets monthly.

Outreach – Community Involvement



We have an active and engaged community promoting and participating in events and activities, including quiz-nights, a harvest supper, sponsored walks, a Christmas sale and dinner evenings: all are well supported by both congregation and village. Regular community events are organised to raise funds. Wider involvement of our villagers comes with our monthly community cafe (Cafe Blodwel) and a series of monthly evening talks (First Friday) promoting "knowledge, conversation and mingling". Public houses exist in Llyncllys and Porth-y-Waen. The Horseshoe Inn in Llanyblodwel dates back to the fifteenth century.

First Friday

Other activities include a reading group, the Tanat Investment Club and the Upper Tanat Fishing Club. There was, until the pandemic, an active WI which we are seeking to re-establish.

Llanymynech - St Agatha's

The Community

We are a parish divided by the Welsh border which even splits our churchyard! Their cross-border situation is culturally important to the self-image of the three parish communities: Llanymynech, Pant and Carreghofa. We have learned to work positively together even when enduring very divisive lockdown rules during Covid. In the last fifteen years, five new developments have been added to the village. Some of the villagers were born here but the new housing has brought in commuters, with roots elsewhere, who work in places like Shrewsbury. This has also brought in more families. At present, the church has not succeeded in reflecting this in the make-up of its regular congregations.



Our Church and its Community



Our congregation is made up of friends who work well together. We regret the absence of families at our Sunday services but try to reach out to them in other ways. We have had a few new worshippers joining us and would like to build our middle-aged and early retired members further - as well as the missing families. We would like to have small group meetings which might encourage newcomers more.

In our services, we enjoy learning more about our faith, particularly when themes are developed through stories and points explored through examples we can relate to.

The PCC adopts an annual budget. Successful fund-raising events, particularly very popular concerts, help ensure the payment of the Common Fund. The closed churchyards, vested in the Local Authority, are well maintained and the L.A. cemetery is very close by.

Our Worship

In Church there is a PA system. There is also a projector, which is not often used - so our range of hymns is rather limited. We would like to be able use this more effectively. There are service booklets for all the seasons. We have a regular organist, with a well-maintained organ. Two members of the congregation are able to act as Worship Leaders and two as Altar Servers and there is a Sacristan. We share Benefice Lay Readers when needed.

Many locals feel connected to but not regular members of the church. We are involved in village activities and the village shows affection for its church by supporting us. Recently a Facebook group has been active in supporting Church events and giving practical help with maintenance, floral arrangements and cleaning. We try hard to be a welcoming church and lament the lack of families at our regular services. Our Crib service last Christmas, however, saw a congregation of over 150 with families well represented. Guides and



Brownies attend special occasions as unofficial groups. The Nursery School and two Primary Schools take turns to decorate the church for festivals. A group chosen from various classes from Carreghofa school attend the Community Cafe. They mingle with the diners, practising their social skills and sometimes are more actively involved, even cooking the meal one month!

Outreach

Church members and other local people organise the Cafe in the Church Hall, providing the lunch and entertainment. Numbers vary from thirty to fifty people. It has already brought some disabled and other isolated people more into the village community. Several members of the congregation meet with other Christians for Compline on Zoom every Sunday. This is very important to them and has run regularly since the start of lockdown

Bryn Offa, the English Church Controlled School is in Pant, and there is also a Primary School in Carreghofa on the Welsh side . Bryn Offa is further from the church building so its children must cross a busy road and walk a long way. Our recent incumbent has worked well with the schools over the last ten years. What is needed now is a successor to build on these foundations. Secondary children commute to English and Welsh schools outside the village, all of which have good reputations.



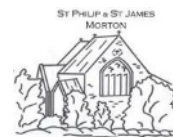
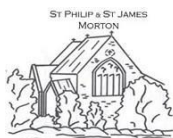
An Amazing Heritage Area

To the north, the parish runs along the busy and narrow A483 into Pant. Here ribbon development has extended on both sides, gradually merging into the village of Morton and its parish. Over the last few years, a Partnership between the two Councils and other local organisations has revived and improved the built and natural environment with the aim of economic regeneration. This included the Heritage Area with the impressive Hoffmann Kiln, an important industrial-archaeological site. Above the villages towers Llanymynech Hill, with an SSSI and a renowned Golf Club.

A Warm Welcome

Many visitors to the church can testify to the warm welcome they received. After the service on the first Sunday of the month, we meet together for tea and biscuits in our well-used hall adjacent to the Church which has recently been extended and has a good modern, well-equipped kitchen. It is popular for social events and regular meetings for groups of all ages.

Morton – St Philip and St James



The Parish of Morton **TOGETHER**

Our Church and its community have committed to our shared vision Committed to Growth, Rooted in Jesus; Fruitful in Mission and Service.

The Church of St Philip and St James

There has been a place of worship on the site since 1685. The present church was built of locally quarried stone in 1873, through the generosity of local benefactors. Some of their families still have a relationship with the church. A fine Hill Organ was gifted at the time of the church's completion. Morton church has an association with HMS Manchester. Its standard was presented to the church upon the disbanding of the ship's association. In the closed churchyard, there are several Commonwealth War Graves. There is an open churchyard, where the maintenance is a PCC responsibility.



Meet and Eat

The Bell from the original church was saved and rehung in the new building. However, it became unsafe over the years, and in 2018 it was completely refurbished and rings out daily. Our building is in good order and a team of volunteers support the churchwardens in their duties of care for the church and its grounds. There is a PA loop system. The interior is inviting: light, and airy. There are two fine stained-glass windows in the east and the north. There have been recent renovations to the boundary wall, and spaces set aside for planting

and reflection. The church was awarded Silver Eco Status in 2022. We are now committed to uphold our Eco principles, always looking for ways to improve.

Our Community

The church lies at the geographical centre of the parish in the hamlet of Morton. There are two other hamlets: Crickheath and Sweeney which are distinct from the larger settlement in Pant. Pant has a range of amenities including a shop and a Memorial Hall which we use for our monthly outreach activities. Local children attend the Bryn Offa school in Pant and then have a choice to transfer to secondary school at either The Marches School in Oswestry or Llanfyllin High School.

The churchwardens are trustees of Morton village playing field and successful fundraising events have been held there. The Montgomery Canal passes through the parish and has been subject to significant restoration to open the canal completely to Newtown in Powys. There is also a heritage railway which is open in summer and at weekends. People work both locally and further afield. It is an area rich with agricultural tradition and several farms have been in the same families for generations. As with many border communities there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit and there has been significant growth in the area as a whole over the last twenty years.

Our worship

Worship and prayer play a central role in our spiritual lives here in Morton. This is demonstrated in our worship every Sunday morning, and our occasional Evensong. The Eucharist is our main service and follows the Common Worship. Vestments are worn in our church.



An outreach activity in Pant - the Meet and Eat - is well attended and has been adapted to be inclusive. This has been successful in attracting adults, children, and individuals who seek succour and comfort in these challenging times. Major festivals are well attended, in part because we have a tradition of involving members of the congregation to lead elements of the service. There is now a well-established and highly successful SATB choir, which sings on Communion Sunday of each month and is regularly asked to sing at other local Churches.



Sofa Club

We have a range of successful initiatives that add to the vibrancy and relevance of our Church: we are dementia friendly, as demonstrated in the work of the Sofa Club's twice monthly meetings; the growth of family worship through involving our young people in MAP developments; our Forest Church.

Our Future

'I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me'. Philippians 4:13.'

The Challenges

At Morton we are committed to evangelism and understand that this will be achieved through engaging creatively with our community. We are mindful of the need to become more diverse so that the Church will continue to play an essential role in the life, worship and well-being of our congregation and the wider community.

To fulfil our vision we have developed an action plan that details what we are doing, how we are doing it, and target milestones so that our spiritual journey can be progressed and achieved.

Together – We are working hard to continue to build a sustainable and thriving community of worship. We are mindful of our duty of care for each other and strive to be inclusive, open, and welcoming. We do this through a vibrant programme of choral music and recitals. We generate interest, funds, and engagement through our 150 Club monthly prize draw, our Parish magazine, and 4Cs coffee group. We are also establishing a Friends of Morton Church Group, following the very successful community fundraiser that marked the church's 150th anniversary. While it may sometimes be a struggle, we always manage to pay our Common Fund.

Committed to Growth –

We are committed to bringing in new worshippers by being open and accessible. The church in Morton holds a special place in the lives of many. Several worshippers travel some distances to be with us. The Forest Church and our links to the School at Bryn Offa enable us to reach out to different age and interest groups.

Rooted in Jesus -

Worshippers are struck by the deep conviction experienced within our services, the warmth, sincerity and friendliness of our welcome, our commitment, inclusivity and our appetite for challenge and change. We uphold our values, traditions, and history, but we will always keep challenging our customs and practices.



Fruitful in Service and Mission

We do not make presumptions about the needs and wishes of our community. We are here to serve, and it is important that we listen and communicate. Our PCC is very active in the community, ensuring we dynamically harvest their views. We have drawn up a detailed and ambitious set of activities and programmes which resonate with the Diocesan strategy and we are energetically and purposefully delivering it.

We are very excited by the prospect of our new Rector joining us in Morton and leading us in the next stage of our journey of discovery and renewal.

Trefonen – All Saints

The Village

Trefonen is a village with a population of about 1400, comprising old and modern housing. As well as the church, it has a thriving C of E (controlled) primary school, shop, pub, village hall, playing field and many active community groups. The parish also includes the smaller adjoining villages of Treflach and Nantmawr and is surrounded by farms and outstanding countryside. Offa's Dyke Path runs through the villages. The church, built in 1820, is well maintained, has Wi-Fi, and part of the closed churchyard has been turned into a community garden. The church is usually open during the day.



Church Family and Worship

All Saints' Church is known for being a welcoming and inclusive church. We are mission-driven, seeking to tell others of Christ's love for them. We rely on the Bible as our primary source of knowledge about God and seek to rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance through personal and group prayer as we attempt to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Our Church Family, with members coming from a variety of denominations and traditions, is small and mainly elderly, but nevertheless reaches out to our community in many ways. The weekly worship is a mix of traditional Holy Communion services and more informal lay-led



services. The Services of the Word, led by the Lay Reader and our lay worship leaders are Bible-centred with participation from other members of the congregation. We are open to refreshing our styles of worship and liturgy. There is a small group leading the singing, sometimes with instruments; we mostly use Mission Praise. At festivals, a choir may be formed to aid worship. There is coffee and fellowship after the services.



We continue our fellowship in mid week Home Groups, where we learn, grow in our faith and support each other. The PCC endeavours to maintain its financial responsibilities and ensures that the parish can pay its Common Fund contribution each year, whilst supporting the Rector's expenses, Benefice Administrator and maintaining the church building.

Worship on Chapel Green Summer 24

Community

We want our church to be a central part of the community, not a separate entity only for a few. We therefore try to be outward-focused and to participate fully in community events, such as the Hill Walk Weekend, and in local groups. Our outward approach is shown by:

- community outreach events at Easter, Harvest and Christmas including BBQs, children's games, interactive story-time and occasional outdoor services on the Chapel Green followed by light lunch at the pub. These events are planned by the Mission Steering Group and assisted by the wider Church Family; they have a particular focus on children and families and are not infrequently attended by real donkeys!
- a weekly Community Café in the village hall; started almost 10 years ago, run by church volunteers with support from members of the community. 20-30 folk attend each week, including many non-churchgoers. It organises an annual seaside outing.
- keeping in touch with members and others in need through the Pastoral Visiting group;
- the issuing of a Welcome Pack with information about the church and community;
- hosting a Harvest lunch in the village hall for all in the community;
- holding regular services at the local care home;
- supporting the annual Hill Walk event, organised by a church member, raising 5-figure sums for charity whilst bringing the whole community together in lots of activities including a church service indoors or on Chapel Green.
- We publish a printed Parish magazine for the whole community, also available online, 10 times a year, free of charge; it has a Facebook page for more timely news.



Community Café at Christmas

Our School

We have good links with Trefonen C of E primary school next door to the church and are eager to ensure that they continue. About half of the pupils live in the parish, so we want to build a closer relationship between the church family and the children, staff and parents. A church member is currently Chair of Governors and the Rector is an ex-officio governor. The previous Rector regularly took assemblies. Lively end of term school services and drama events are held in the church, which are very well attended by parents. There are class visits to the church where members of the congregation explain the meaning of Christian symbols

and the children ask questions about the Christian faith. Church members help the children with their reading. We support the Schools Christian Worker who works in the schools across the Oswestry area, including our own.

Looking more widely...

- We belong to and are represented at meetings of Churches Together in Oswestry;
- We collect and deliver food for the Oswestry Food Bank regularly, especially at Harvest;
- We have an annual Toy Service to collect toys, provisions and toiletries for the Food Bank and a nearby Family Crisis Centre.
- We believe in planned giving and set aside part of our income to donate to selected charities at home or abroad.



...and looking forward...

We recognise that we are an ageing congregation with limited resources (*at present!*), but we have big hearts and high hopes! We need a leader who will share our vision, who will prioritise relationships with people and sharing the gospel, who will encourage and enable us to continue in loving outreach and develop as Christ's contemporary disciples. We want someone to join us in facing this challenge.

Our vision is that as we grow in love and faith, God will create opportunities for us to express our faith lovingly and intelligently to people in our 21st century community. Our hope is that they will see that Jesus Christ is relevant to their lives, come to personal faith and want to join us, making our church family more representative of the community and creating a further springboard for the growth of God's Kingdom in Trefonen.



Thank you for taking the time to read this Benefice Profile. We hope and pray that you will consider whether God is calling you to become our next Rector.

We conclude with a prayer

GOD OUR FATHER

*You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His Body in this place.
Send us your Holy Spirit,
to fill us with vision, energy,
and faithfulness in prayer,
that we may be true to our calling
to bring new life to our communities.
Guide with your heavenly wisdom
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this Benefice,
that the one whom we receive
may be a wise and caring shepherd of your people:
ready to serve us with joy,
to build us up in faith,
and to lead us by example
in loving obedience to your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.*



Llanyblodwel



Llanymynech