



StowCable Churches

to bring Jesus Christ to the people of our benefice

StowCable Benefice

is seeking a VICAR

in the Ross and Archenfield Deanery

Hereford Archdeaconry

Diocese of Hereford

Parish Profile and Role Description

Summer 2024



Part 1

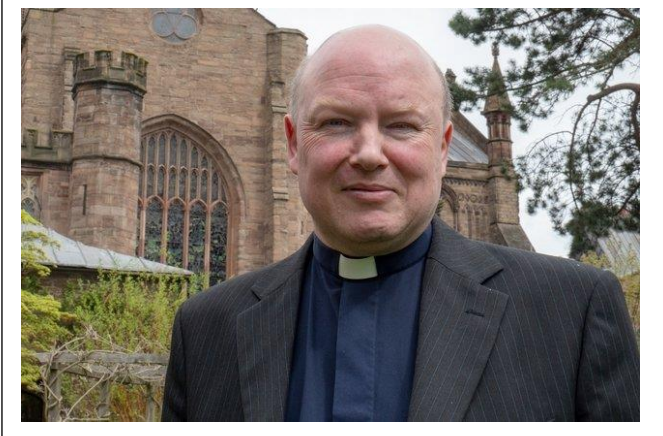
Contents

Part 1	Page
A word from The Archdeacon and the Rural Dean	3
StowCaple Benefice	5
Bridstow Parish	6
Foy Parish	9
How Caple Parish	13
Kings Caple Parish	15
Peterstow Parish	18
Sellack Parish	20
Sollershope Parish	22
Fawley Chapel	25
Current service schedule	26
Who's who – collaborative mission and ministry	27
Part 2	
Vicar Person Specification	28
The House – Kings Caple Rectory	29
Our support for you	30



A word from the The Archdeacon and the Rural Dean

Derek Chedzey, our Archdeacon says...



Thank you for your interest in the Benefice of StowCaple. This is an exciting opportunity in a friendly Benefice for the right person. We are looking for someone who can work in a genuine collaborative spirit with fellow clergy and lay colleagues and can love people before trying to change them. We are looking for someone with a heart for pastoral care, who longs to see young and old come to living faith in Jesus Christ and supported on their journey of discipleship. A great deal of thought has gone into the preparation of this profile. It provides an outline of the role, the skills and experience that we are looking for.

This is an exciting time to join in the work of these churches in this Deanery, and the Diocese. As Vicar, you will have strategic and pastoral oversight for the communities and churches that make up the benefice. Like much of rural Herefordshire, it is made up of small independently minded communities who will need help to learn what is best done together with others and what they can do effectively on their own.

There is considerable potential for community engagement, cooperative working, team building and in the mission of the church in its widest sense. As a Diocese, we are committed to spiritual and numerical growth, growing Christians of all ages.

We see parish ministry as the centre of the Diocese and are seeking to ensure all our clergy are well supported and cared for so they can minister fruitfully. It is important to us that we genuinely work together. The challenges we face are too much for individual parishes or clergy to go it alone, and the central structures of the Diocese operate in partnership with the parishes, so that each level of the church is doing what only it can do best.

There are exciting developments in our diocese, which has been expressed, in our refreshed Diocesan strategy. We want to see both revitalised parish churches and new worshipping communities engaging with groups where our incarnational connection has been lost. We are looking for engaged, Christ-like and prayerful people at the heart of our local communities.

A warm welcome awaits the right person. We look forward to working with you to inspire new generations, proclaim the Gospel and develop disciples.

Derek Chedzey

Sheila Anthony, our Rural Dean says...



StowCople Benefice, a benefice of seven parishes, is one of seven in the Ross and Archenfield deanery which encompasses the market town of Ross-on-Wye and many small villages covering a large area. Set in a National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) it attracts many tourists visiting the Wye Valley. Although we are situated in a beautiful part of the country with many winding country lanes, we are also fortunate to be close to excellent road links such as the M50 giving access to the M5 and good A roads to the market town of Ross-on-Wye, and the cities of Hereford and Worcester.

You will be joining us at an exciting phase as Hereford Diocese is currently looking at a new strategy and, in this deanery, we are also focussing upon pastoral reorganisation. There is a warm welcome waiting for all our new colleagues, and we very much look forward to working together in these exciting times.

We are fortunate in this benefice to be supported by retired clergy and a lay reader. We are also fully committed to equipping and enabling lay ministry to all ages, young and old, with the aim of helping everyone to encounter the love of Jesus.

A secondary school LifeLink Chaplain is being appointed with the intention of increasing our ministry and connection to young people, their families and schools with the local churches across the deanery.

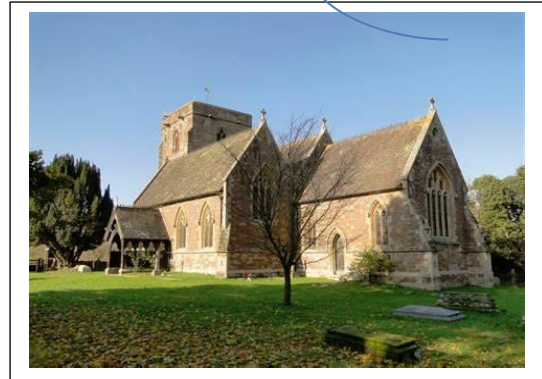
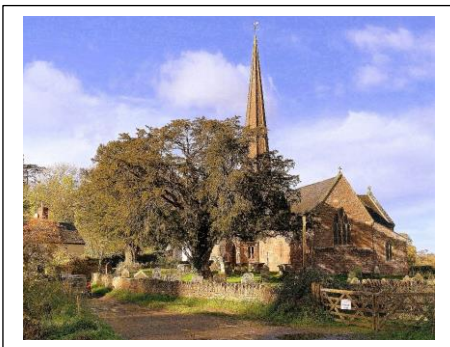
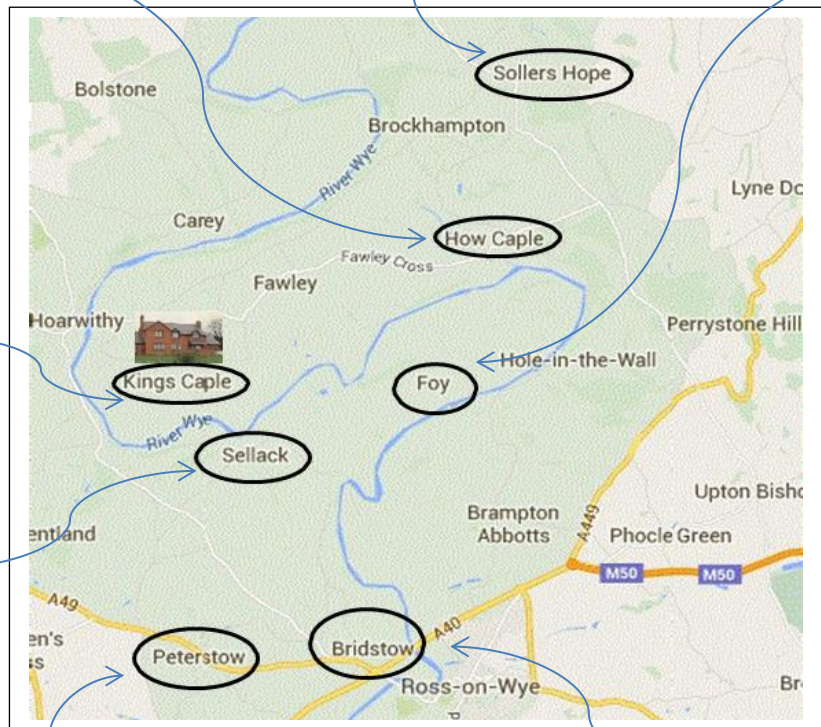
We hope and pray that you feel God calling you into this benefice and if that is the case, we very much look forward to working with you in this next phase of the exciting mission in this benefice and deanery.

Sheila Anthony



StowCadle Benefice

Seven Parish Churches, and a chapel, amongst which the River Wye meanders



Parish Profile of St Bridget's Bridstow



The parish of Bridstow is approximately one mile from Ross on Wye. Embraced by the River Wye, Ross is an inviting place to visit. When William Gilpin wrote Britain's first travel guidebook about the Wye Valley in 1782, he sparked a trend for 'picturesque tourism'. Today, as well as enjoying that same scenic beauty, the town has independent shops, 19th-century mock-Gothic walls and a Gazebo Tower, with pastel-hued dwellings tumbling down the hillside to the river.

The town promotes choir, music, theatre and film events. There are canoeing, rowing, walking, rugby, bowling and tennis activities on offer too.

In addition to Ross-on-Wye being voted the UK's best-loved market town with an active market, there is easy access to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Wye Valley, The Forest of Dean and the Brecon Beacons National Park.



Bridstow parish is bounded to the east and south by the River Wye. There is quick access to the M50 towards the Midlands and London and the A40 to Bristol and South Wales. The nearest Airports are Bristol and Birmingham which can be easily reached using the excellent road network as described. The nearest rail network access is at Hereford and Gloucester.

With 53 on the church electoral roll, there are approximately 860 people who live in the rural village of Bridstow. Farming is the main local employment sector. Included in the parish is the village of Wilton which has a garage and an integral shop as well as a couple of pubs.

Bridstow parish has a Church, a modern and spacious Church of England Primary School, and a well-maintained Village Hall which is used by the community and local clubs including the Guides and Brownies. St Bridget's is represented on the Village Hall Committee. Coffee mornings are held monthly with many of the community attending for social support and interaction. Funds are raised at these gatherings for the Church and charity.



Our parish Church, dedicated to St Bridget, has a tower in the Perpendicular style. The rest of the exterior was rebuilt in 1862 to a design by Thomas Nicholson. There are several important stained-glass windows, many designed by Charles Kempe.

The earliest building on the present site was a Welsh Church. In 1066 a Norman Church was consecrated at Bridstow.

Near to the Church is the Bridstow CE Primary School which is a Voluntary Aided Church of England co-educational school for pupils aged between 4 and 11. Its motto is "Shine as a light in the World". The school children attend Church services at the end of term and for major festivals.



We wish to maintain a good relationship with the school children, with the priest leading some morning assemblies and giving pastoral care whilst also encouraging parents and children to attend our Sunday service.



We are fortunate to have local retired clergy and a lay preacher who are willing to assist in the smooth running of Church services.

There are also volunteers who help with sidesman duties, administration of the sacrament and maintenance of altar linen and flower arranging, reading and intercessions whilst also helping to prepare the Church for major festivals.

St Bridget's has three services a month, with Communion being celebrated twice. One service is lay led. There are three organists in the

benefice and a pianist who play on various Sundays and at other events. St Bridget's is a popular church for weddings, funerals and baptisms.



Bell ringers practice every Wednesday evening and ring in Church once per month. They are available to ring at weddings, funerals and celebrate other special and national events.

The church is open daily, and the Churchyard and grounds are well maintained by a dedicated volunteer.

St Bridget's is a welcoming Church, with an average congregation of 15-20. Festivals are well attended by the wider community, in particular the Patronal Festival. The music is enhanced at major festivals by the Stowcaple Benefice Singers.

There is a continually active PCC which provides dedicated support in moving Church matters forward. This year we are hoping to install running water so we can improve catering arrangements and toilet facilities.

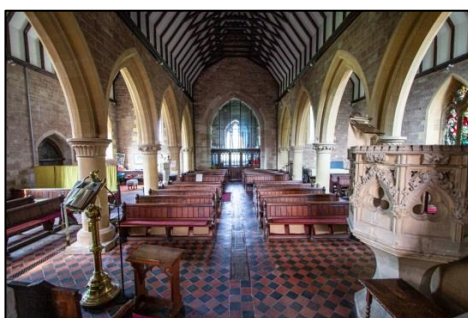
The PCC organises social and fund-raising events throughout the year, including the Patronal Festival and lunch, Harvest lunch and walks with afternoon tea.

Our congregation participates in assisting with the Ross Community larder, a volunteer collecting donated items left in Church after the Sunday service. The Church also makes donations from festival collections.



There are challenges ahead as in most Churches but there is a willingness to try and address those challenges both spiritually and physically. One of our challenges is to bring younger families to Church and encourage fresh ideas to develop the ongoing life of the Church and promote Christ's message into the future, subsequently we look for leadership from the new priest.

The congregation are keen to support the new priest with the pastoral care for the parish and organise a network of volunteers who can help supporting those in need.



Parish Profile of St Mary's, Foy



The Parish of Foy is bisected by the River Wye as it meanders south from the Cathedral city of Hereford to the Georgian centred market town of Ross-on-Wye. The Church stands on an outcrop of Old Red Sandstone and unusually was constructed orientated in line with the course of the river Northeast to Southwest. The Location is idyllic with peaceful meadowland between wooded valley slopes with a centrepiece of a 1920s antique steel and timber suspension footbridge spanning the river which replaced an earlier Victorian version swept away by flood.

History

The Wye once formed the natural border twixt Wales and England under which the Welsh dug tunnels to enable their raids into English territory. One of these raiding tunnels was located just upstream of the Foy footbridge. During the Middle Ages the River formed the principal and easiest route of communication through the area. Waterborne trade was enjoyed through the village with the hamlet of Hole-in-the-Wall on the East Bank of Foy becoming one of the most important Wye trading ports.

On 'Hill of Eaton' the lord of the manor, Sir Robert de Tregoz, built his castle to defend this route. Unfortunately, as he chose to support and die with the vanquished Simon de Montfort at the battle of Evesham in 1265, his castle was demolished by the future King Edward 1 in retribution.



The first church, consecrated soon after 1050, was dedicated to the Celtic St Tvyoi or Ffwy. Soon after the Normans, not recognising Celtic saints, changed this to St Foi or Foye being ancient French for Faith. It later became St Mary the Virgin. The Origins of the church can be found in the 13th C. north-west Nave rubble wall. The early 14th C. Chancel and the remaining Nave walling is built of dressed local Old Red Sandstone as is the square bell tower. This was reconstructed with masonry from the demolished castle, identified by masons' marks and ferried across the river. From within there is evidence that atop this once stood a steeple. Between late medieval, through Tudor to the Jacobean ages there is evidence of much prosperity in Foye.

The Abrahalls of Eton built their Jacobean manor house named Inkeston on the West bank of the Wye in 1616. It burned down in 1785 and was replaced in the 1830's by Ingestone, a Georgian style manor house. They were first heard of in the fifteenth century as "knights of the shire". The family crest was the hedgehog and motto 'J'AY GUARDÉ LA FOY' in ancient French 'I have kept the faith'. John Kyrle 'The Man of Ross', a great local benefactor, was a descendant and took their family hedgehog crest to be Ross town crest. The Abrahalls also provided the clergy at Foy for over four centuries, continuing on the female line with the Jones in the mid 1800's then latterly the Wiltons with the last, Charles Wilton, vacating shortly after WWII. The Georgian Parsonage house was built in 1731 next to the church and was greatly altered and extended in 1867 by the Jones family in Victorian style. As was common practice in the 1950's much was demolished preserving principally the original old Georgian Rectory.

These two Georgian houses together with the farms of Underhill, Ingestone and Hill of Eaton were well populated with staff and once described as 'townships'. With mechanisation many of those countryfolk drifted into nearby towns and were replaced by incomers either working further afield or retired.

More Recently

Farms are now split twixt Underhill, How Caple Estate, Perrystone and Carthage. In the late 20th C. much of Hole-in-the-Wall was owned by PGL Travel Ltd a company providing adventure holidays for young teenagers. Recently reorganised, they have now sold their Foy property base. So again, there has been a small influx of newcomers. Generally, there are both holiday and longer term lets locally. The Wye is enjoyed and paddled by canoeists many of whom alight on the island in front of the church to barbeque or overnight. Although still popular with fishermen of both game and course fish, the river has for the last two years suffered due to wide fluctuations in level and pollution issues. One of the local farms has diversified into both, a small well-run, select RV and Caravan site open all year, and a seasonal field caravan and motor home site open for some six weeks.



Infrastructure

The church building could be regarded as being the only village focal point. There is no public transport either along the no through country lane into West Foy or the lane through East Foy



which loops between Brampton Abbots and How Caple. The closest shop and Post Office is in Peterstow, about five miles), as the local equivalents closed in the 1960's. The nearest Church of England Primary School is at Bridstow about four miles and the John Kyrle High School is in the Overcross area of Ross- on-Wye. School buses have previously collected for both from Foy. Although there was a tavern, The Anchor and Can, in East Foy, this is no more. The closest is now the Loughpool about three miles, then the Red Lion both in Sellack or, the Yew Tree in Peterstow.

On an idyllic summer's day in July 2023 our then incumbent, wife and two mutts lead a Benefice wide Pilgrimage from St Michael's Church, Sollershope along highways, byways footpaths and across the Wye suspension bridges. At St Mary's Foy he had collected some thirty-six souls who prayed in our nave and enjoyed refreshments from the vantage point of our south terrace, high above their way to end at St Bridget's Church, Bridstow.

Parish Finances

Here at Foy, we are very conscious that the word 'church' has two meanings. The first refers to clergy, mission and services. The second refers to the church building. We, therefore, give every donor the opportunity to decide which of the two their donation should benefit. Either our Clergy expenses and our Parish Offer to the Diocesan Common Fund or Fabric to the cost of maintaining and running our church building. This is, we feel, an honest and equitable solution. Others wrongly choose, through smoke and mirrors, to fund the one through donations innocently thought given for the benefit of the other. Through our approach we have found that in most cases donations are pretty much equally split. Monies raised to clergy expenses and the common fund are paid each year so there is no vast restricted fund held by us in this regard. Obviously, our fabric fund is restricted, and we hold the bulk on deposit to be drawn on if required. This currently stands well into five figures.

In 2008-11 however, we undertook a total re-roof of our nave and chancel. Much fundraising and grant aid assisted this work, and it cost in the region of £120,000 to complete. Presently we have work undergoing preliminary necessities for the cleaning, repointing and repair of our tower masonry. We also require repair to the rotted supporting beams holding our bell frame aloft. Again, this separate project is in its infancy. We are keen to be able to hear our six-bell peal rung again particularly as a feature to offer for traditional wedding ceremonies. We hope to be able to fund both from our restricted fabric fund without the delays resulting from grant application.

We are very conscious that all expenditure must be sustainable to enable our 'churches' to survive.

Services: Services in Foy are held once a month, excluding November. These are on the Second Sunday alternating between a BCP or Family Eucharistic service. Additionally, there are four 'special' Easter, Patronal, Harvest, and Christmas services. Within the constraints of GDPR

considerable effort is put into publicising these services together with after service refreshments to encourage and increase attendance. Prior to Covid the attendance at our Christmas Eve carol service was peaking at around eighty. Last Christmas, 2023 the attendance was seventy-two. A long hard road back from the pandemic.

Church Tradition

At the beginning of the 20th C., with a healthy resident population, all conversant with their local incumbent St Mary's Church Foy was well attended and looked after. Following the end of WW2 when the tradition of a local parish ordained incumbent disappeared, and benefice parish groups were created the congregation has gradually diminished up until the present day. There was still however a largely unchanging local population who found it difficult to trust and confide in what they considered to be a newcomer thus only those with a life-long Christian belief and therefore elderly, have remained regular church goers. Post Covid this issue has become exacerbated.

This erosion, in our opinion, can only begin to be halted by clerical visitation to parishioners which has been totally lacking in recent years. Surely, priesthood is a calling from God. A priest brings Jesus to people and people to Jesus. For this reason, a priest must have a deep concern for the people of God. The priest should help them grow in holiness; they should teach them the truths of the faith; they



must be eager to minister to them during the trials of life. A priest who chooses to isolate himself from his parishioners WILL fail in all of these goals and therefore their mission and calling from God. They will not be the incumbent we require.

The Path Forward

We feel that the Church needs to urgently consider:

Appointing Locally Resident Ordained Priests who will only be responsible for their own church and parish. They will have a good background knowledge of all parishioners and likewise be known by those parishioners. As with other local church officers the post would probably be undertaken on a voluntary unpaid basis with, being a local homeowner, very little expense to the Diocese. The post would need to be administered and carefully overseen by the Archdeacon.



This Summer's Leverets sheltering in their form
between St Mary's Graves.....
.....a new beginning.

Parish Profile of St Andrew's with St Mary's How Caple



How Caple is a very small, rural village. It has a mix of houses – small, larger and some social housing. There are about 100 names on the civil electoral roll. The church is adjacent to How Caple Court. Although independent of the Court we have close connections with the Lee family who live there.

How Caple and Sollershope parishes have been linked for very many years and shared an incumbent well before we became part of a larger benefice.

Our church community includes many regulars from around South Herefordshire, with an average congregation of 21. We have large numbers and sometimes a full church for special services, such as Carol Service and Harvest Festival. Our organist brings together the mixed ability, all ages How Caple Church Choir to sing for special occasions and joining the choir is often the route to worshipping at our church. We regularly provide refreshments after services, appropriate to the time of day, and we strive to make everyone welcome.

We use the liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible and a number of people regularly attend from outside the parish in order to take part in BCP services. We usually have two Holy Communion services a month and a lay led Morning Prayer service.

The Friends of How Caple Church group was started in 2020 to raise funds for preservation of the church and provide a link with the church for those who do not live locally but have a connection, such as having been baptised or married here. The Friends meet weekly to maintain the churchyard and work on the identification of graves which are poorly marked or have crumbling headstones.

Once a month there is a 'mother and toddler' event named Ziggisaurus held in the Gregory Chapel which has been re-organised to be suitable for meetings and group events. Ziggisaurus welcomes all parents or grandparents with pre-school age children, regardless of background and belief.

We have a number of weddings in the church and this arrangement is complemented by the adjacent How Caple Court having a wedding venue where the couples often hold their receptions.

We appreciate the couples attending church services in order to qualify for marrying in our church; we are always eager to see younger people joining our services. Some couples return to services in our church and we have had some bringing their babies to be christened at How Caple.



Wilmot House, a boarding house of Hereford Cathedral School is about half a mile from the church. Students often spend time looking round the church and they attend services occasionally.

We organise community events, such as a barbecue and dog show and a harvest lunch to encourage all parishioners and neighbours to be included, regardless of whether they are churchgoers or not – alongside raising essential funds. We run a Facebook page for the village and we maintain a Church Near You website entry.

How Caple has a fine church, built mostly in the 14th Century and it contains a number of treasures. We welcome visitors to our church and try to have it unlocked during the day for most of the year.



Parish Profile of St John the Baptist Kings Cuple



Kings Cuple Parish

Kings Cuple lies within a loop of the River Wye and is about 12 miles south of Hereford. Depending on traffic, Hereford City is approximately 30 minutes away. The cities of Cardiff, Cheltenham, Oxford and the town of Shrewsbury, are all easily accessed by arterial roads, with travel to London taking about 3.5 hours by road.

No major roads pass through the parish which is served by two bridges, one of which is vehicular connecting to Hoarwithy village and leading to the A49, Hereford and Ross on Wye beyond. The other is a footbridge (1895) linking to Sellack. The Parish is within an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The principal activities of the parish are arable, stock farming, equine and soft fruit farming, which supports significant numbers of seasonal workers from overseas. The parish has around 331 residents (2011 census),

There is a primary school with around 23 pupils and two teachers at present. It is not a C of E school but an Academy. The parish is served by GP surgeries located in Much Birch , Fownhope, and Ross on Wye. There are no shops, pubs, or a post office, however there are some local daily delivery services for dairy, newspapers, as well as the usual online delivery services. Hereford is the nearest rail connection; the bus service serving both Kings Caple and neighbouring Hoarwithy is poor, making car transport an essential.

St John the Baptist Church and Congregation

St. John the Baptist Church dates from around the 13th century and occupies one of the highest parts of the parish. The Church can seat up to 220 people and has a large unobstructed nave, with fixed box pews and a raised pulpit. There are no toilets, or piped water, therefore water has to be brought into the church when required. Toilet facilities are available, subject to booking, in the Old School building which has been converted into a village hall; this is situated a brisk 5 minute walk from the church.

There is a limited amount of under pew electrical heating. Also a large air blown oil fired heating system. There are problems with the siting of the oil tank, at present preventing the oil company from delivering oil, but it is hoped this will be corrected imminently. The Chancel is in the process of having its ceiling repaired

Worship and Finance

In addition to Sunday services, St John's holds a number of other events and services.

During **Lent**, soup, bread and cheese are served at the Old School hall for donations which generally go to a charity. This is one of our popular events.

Palm Sunday Service - Kings Caple has been linked with Sellack for centuries. Pax Cakes are distributed after the Palm Sunday service which alternates between Kings Caple and Sellack Churches. The Pax Cakes distributed nowadays are a shortcake biscuit, which used to have the words peace and good neighbourhood imprinted on them. Historically they were distributed with ale and cider. On Palm Sunday, there is a procession across the footbridge between Kings Caple and Sellack, prior to the service at the hosting church.

Good Friday - Historically, there is a midday reading and a short outdoor service held on the "Tump", (outside the church gate), but in very recent years the service has been held inside the church.

The Bridge Service - This is an early evening service in the summertime which has been held by the foot bridge between Kings Caple and Sellack parishes, accompanied by musicians.



Harvest Festival - is an important event in the year and has been followed by a lunch held either in the church or nearby. Of late, the Harvest lunch has been hosted at Poulston Mill with a marquee seating up to 80 people; hot roast lunch with puddings, to suit appetites!

Remembrance Sunday Service - This service is annually held at Kings Cape due to its capacity, and shared with nearby parishes.

Christmas - A selection of Christmas services are also held here, including a Crib service, and Christingle service, along with our carol service.



Church statistics:

Electoral roll 31.

Baptisms a few.

Marriages a few.

Funeral and interment several.

Number of services per annum, 30-36.

Finances

Congregation levels have dropped following Covid and Covid church closures, resulting in church collections and Gift Aid being insufficient to cover church expenses and parish share quota, hence fundraising is always a requirement.

Parish Profile of St Peter's, Peterstow



Peterstow Parish

The village of Peterstow with a population of about 400 is situated either side of the A49 2.5 miles north of Ross-on-Wye. A feature of the village is the beautiful 6 acre common.

Housing is predominantly privately owned with a high proportion of retired residents. Houses are mostly older cottages and barn conversions. There is also the Yew Tree residential park where a number of residents offer strong support to St Peter's either as worshipers or supporting fundraising events. There is a cluster of newer housing with some young families but few of these residents identify with church. Peterstow has not had a school since 1961 but there is a village shop and two pubs both of which contribute to the community atmosphere. There is an hourly bus service between Ross and Hereford.

The Congregation

The regular congregation reflects the demography of the village with the majority retired. The average attendance at services is between 14 and 20 with higher attendance at Christmas and special services, particularly those with a "community celebration" aspect e.g. Remembrance and the Coronation service. Peterstow is known for its warm welcome to all. St Peter's has recently gained a Silver Award in the Arocha Eco-church scheme.

St Peter's Church

A church stood here in Saxon times, of which a few stones remain. Rebuilt in Norman times with additions and improvements in every century the church was subject to a re-ordering by the Rev John Jebb in 1866 and in 2009 several of the present congregation were involved in the planning of a second major re-ordering to bring the church into the 21st century. The Victorian pews were removed to give flexible seating and a kitchen and toilets were added. As the village had no village hall the church re-ordering offered a village meeting place to be used for both sacred and secular meetings and events. This has served to remove the divide between "church people" and "non-church" people. The fabric of the church is in good condition as all major repairs/decoration took place during the re-ordering and this year ceiling and external roof repairs have been undertaken.

Worship

The congregation has been used to a mixture of Common Worship and BCP services and has tried to maintain a weekly service pattern, relying on lay-leadership for at least one service per month. Eucharist services attract the largest congregation but a recent addition of Evensong once a month has proved popular. St Peter's has many members active in the preparation and delivery of services, lessons are excellently read, sides-persons and two trained eucharist assistants take responsibility for preparing for worship. We are also very fortunate to have a regular talented organist who has encouraged us all to sing! The church has two churchwardens and 6 other PCC members who all work hard to support St Peter's.

Finance

There is no denying that the church is still in recovery from Covid and has recently lost two generous patrons. St Peter's has for many years paid the highest Parish Offer in the benefice and the fourth highest in the Ross and Archenfield Deanery but for the first time since the reordering in 2009 we are facing a deficit partly due to a fall of Hall lettings, and less opportunity for fundraising. Our treasurer utilises all resources to boost our funds including reclaim of gift aid, encouraging direct debit giving and QR codes for visitors. St Peter's is proud of its record of supporting other charities through fund raising events and three times a year our church collections are allocated to specific chosen charities such as the Community Larder in Ross, Embrace, Winston's Wish.

The Future

There is no denying that the congregation is anxious about a future with reduced clergy input but they undoubtedly want their church to survive and will support an incumbent who offers an inspiring spiritual lead and a sense of mission as we need to grow our congregation.

Parish Profile of St Tysilio's, Sellack



The peace and tranquility of the ancient church of St Tysilio's (Sellack) reflects its beautiful rural setting by the banks of the River Wye. The current building has Norman elements but is thought to have been preceded by a wooden building dating back to the 7th century when St Tysilio, a Celtic Saint, brought Christianity to these parts. The building is in a good state of repair after a six figure project of restoration to repair the fine spire, to rewire the building and to install modern catering and toilet facilities. We were delighted to host a Benefice service attended by 145 people to bid farewell to the previous Rector of StowCadle Benefice in April 2024.

We have a small but growing congregation for our regular fourth Sunday service. Before the pandemic we had two dynamic churchwardens, a regular congregation and a very successful fund-raising committee. For various reasons, by the end of 2022, we didn't have a church warden or a fund-raising committee and our regular congregation was much reduced. We now have a completely new set of PCC officers and members who are working as a team to actively rebuild the life of our church, even though we don't have a churchwarden.

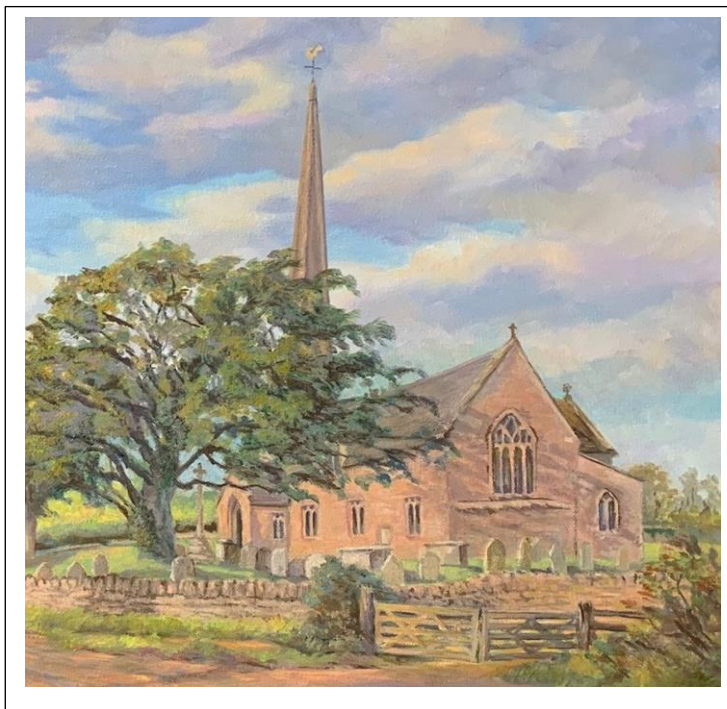
We take encouragement from our traditional Christmas Carol Service being well supported and our regular congregation doubling for festival services. We would like to try new ways to encourage more of our neighbours to join us in church more often.

We find our Bible Study on 2nd Sundays inspiring and have thoughts about how we might widen its appeal.

There are less than 300 people living in the parish and people know each other. Community spirit is alive and well in Sellack. We have an active Sellack Good Neighbours Scheme; a project breathing new life into Sellack War Memorial led by Sellack Parish Council; a thriving Village Hall being steadily modernised, partly funded by donations from the 400 year old Sellack United Charities. We do not have a school or shop, but we do have a pub!

We recognise that we need to look beyond our regular congregation to fund the life of our church. St Tysilio's is located on the popular Herefordshire Trail and we have recently installed a card reader to encourage our many visitors to make a donation. We hope our first fundraising concert since the pandemic, scheduled for September, will be the beginning of rekindling the sense of St Tysilio's being the hub for community events that it used to be.

We are optimistic that our ancient church has a sustainable future, but realistic about the need for change and the scale of the challenge. Our growing congregation is testament to life returning to our church, but we need inspirational leadership to help us to continue to recover and grow.



Parish Profile of St Michael's, Sollershope



The Parish of Sollershope is situated approximately 10 miles south of the City of Hereford, 7 miles north of Ross on Wye, and about 5.5 miles from The Rectory at Kings Caple. There is much to see and appreciate in this little church; almost all visitors who write in our visitor's book refer to its "peace and tranquillity".

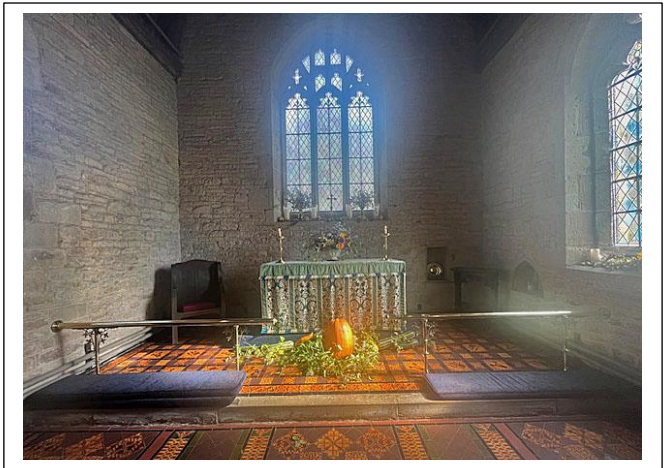
Although our church is small, and Sollershope is listed as having a population of 68, making it the smallest populated parish within the StowCaple Benefice, we are relatively well supported, and are continually looking at ways to evolve, whilst maintaining our traditions. Our church is the only designated meeting place within the Parish and we are currently making plans for the addition of a w.c. and kitchenette.

"Hope" is a Saxon word for valley. There was said to be a Saxon church here, followed by a Norman church or stone. "Sollers" is from de Solers, the Norman family who lived here for 200 years. The font was quarried in 1120, and the present church was dedicated to St Michael in 1390. Traces of early inhabitants are seen in four stone coffin lids, found when the foundations of the vestry were laid when the church was restored in 1886; one has the oldest identifiable coats of arms in the county. Another is possibly that of a crusader, with a ringed cross ending the hilt of a sword. The finest has a ringed cross above a knight in chain-mail; his helmet was identified by the Armourer of the Tower of London as a rare example from 1225.

The church has a surprisingly lofty interior with a fine barrel roof, financed and built by Robert Whittington, elder brother of Dick Whittington, of Lord Mayor of London fame. The Victorian tiles on the chancel floor show the arms of the City of London and Whittington.

The angels on the choir stalls were made by Philip Tilden, one of the great English architects, who lived here in 1916.

The three bells are dated 1567, 1637, and 1663; the oldest is the only one surviving in sound condition from the foundry of John Baker.



Ordinarily, services are held three times a month, taking the format of BCP Evensong during the Summer months, Matins and Communion. Evensong and Matins are the most popular services. Services are usually followed by light refreshments and social interaction.

St Michaels has one diligent Churchwarden, who is supported by the PCC and wider congregation in her efforts. The 2024 Electoral Role lists 20 members; the PCC consists of 9, with an average service attendance of 10-12, with larger attendance for festivals and family occasions.

There is currently no specific provision for young families and children. Services are often from the Book of Common Prayer, with corresponding printed sheets.

St Michaels has a Harmonium played by two regular organists; a hearing loop and sound system including CD player. Hymns are sung from Ancient and Modern, and occasionally 100 Hymns for Today. The church and graveyard is well maintained with, as mentioned earlier, there are plans to add a kitchenette and w.c. St Michaels is regularly used for christenings, funerals and, more occasionally, weddings

St Michaels has been generously favoured by Benefactors over many years, and is financially sound as the result of this, and the generosity of the Parishioners, as well as careful financial management, including the provision of Parish Giving for those who wish to participate in this way. We have also invested in a payment device which enables visitors to donate with ease, as well as providing us with a useful facility for receiving payments at fund raising events.

Sollershope and How Caple Parishes, though independent of each other, have worked together over many years to support each other and, when appropriate, stand down in favour of each other's services, and we would like this spirit of co-operation to continue.

On Palm Sunday we process, usually with a donkey, down the hill to St Michaels for a service and distribution of Palms; more recently, Pax cakes have been distributed, allowing Sollershope to share in the traditions of Kings Caple and Sellack parishes. Our Harvest Festival & Lunch is usually during the 2nd week in October, whilst standing down later in October for How Caple's Harvest Festival. Evensong takes place during the Summer months – on occasion with guest singers.



Nativity Play – a staple of our diaries in the 1990s, we are hoping to re-introduce this in 2024 now that some of our children of the 1990s have children of their own.

We are told that St Michael's has extremely good acoustics and we have hosted some very talented singers, most recently in March 2024, when we held a candle-lit choral concert.

Rogation Sunday – late April or May - for many years an out-door service held either outside the church or, in recent times, in the church meadow, with attendees encouraged to bring along animals for blessing. In recent times Rogation Sunday has expanded to include dog show, fete and duck race, but has not been re-instated since Covid.

Historically, we have held a Quiz Night, often in December with a Christmas theme, to be reinstated following Covid shut-down.



We pride ourselves in offering a friendly welcome to all, from a Church which is unlocked at all times.

In preparing our Parish Profile, we realise how Covid, in part, has impacted on both our regular events and has put on plans we have for the future. Though we are one of the smaller churches and parishes, we have huge enthusiasm for the future and look forward to working with you, supporting each other, to continue to build both the spiritual and community life at St Michael's, Sollershope.



St John the Baptist Chapel, Fawley



The 12th Century Chapel at Fawley was linked to Fownhope Parish from the 17th Century and continued in this way until it was deemed redundant in 1980. This led to the formation of the Fawley Chapel Trust in 1985 and the transfer of ownership. The present Trustees are the local Bellamy and Green families.

Since that time, by special permission of the Bishop of Hereford, a quarterly service has been held at Fawley Chapel on the 5th Sunday in the month. The services at this special place of worship are very well attended by the parishes in the Benefice.

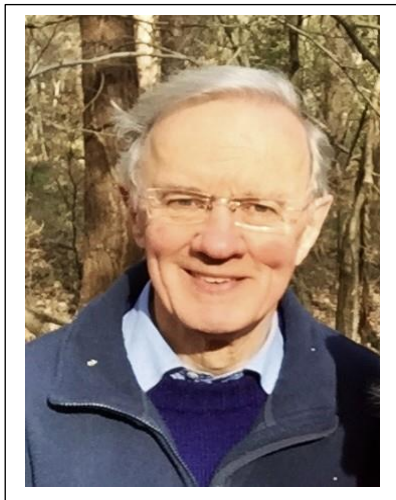
StowCape Current Service Schedule

Parish/ Sunday	Bridstow	Foy	How Cape	Kings Cape	Peterstow	Sellack	Sollers Hope
1st Sunday 9.30am 11.15am 6pm	MP CW		MP BCP	Euch CW	Euch CW		ES BCP (Sum)
2nd Sunday 9.30am 11.15am 3.30pm		Euch BCP			ES BCP	Bib.Study/ Prayer	Mat BCP
3rd Sunday 9.30am 11.15am	Euch CW				MP CW		Euch BCP
4th Sunday 9.30am 10am 11.15am	Euch CW		Matins	Messy Ch		Euch CW	
5th Sunday 9.30am 11.15am	Benefice Fawley						

Who's who – collaborative mission and ministry

StowCadle Benefice is, following our previous incumbent's retirement, being led through interregnum by our Rural Dean, the Reverend Sheila Anthony, along with our diligent wardens and administrators.

We are also very fortunate to have an experienced team of lay and retired clergy who help to cover a number of responsibilities across the parishes.



Anthony Priddis

Bishop of Hereford from 2004-2013, Anthony and his wife, Kathy have made their home in StowCadle Benefice, and we are fortunate that he continues to share his skills throughout our Benefice during retirement.

Clifford Offer

Archdeacon of Norwich 1994-2008, Clifford also lives, and works alongside the clergy, in the StowCadle Benefice. Now retired, Clifford generously shares his time with us within the Benefice.



Anthony Thompson

Our talented lay-reader who lives in Hereford, but spends much of his time leading services, or singing within the StowCadle Benefice.

Part 2

Vicar Person Specification

These are the skills you will find useful in fulfilling this role

	Essential	Desirable
Someone who can lead, and inspire, but also listen and respond to both traditional and new ideas; communicate effectively with young and old; enable people who already have faith, or no faith and encourage those who find themselves on a new spiritual journey.	√	
An approachable person, who will be a visible and accessible presence in both the local community and the whole benefice, engaging with all to provide pastoral care and building positive communication with young people, families and schools.	√	
Someone who is flexible, and recognises the need for good time management and delegation, and who seeks out, enables and encourages those who have skills they are able to share or develop.	√	
A good organiser and planner, who provides diversity of services across the benefice.		√
Someone who recognises and encourages our strong musical tradition		√
Someone who has good communication skills		√
Someone who finds time for themselves (and family) amongst a busy workload		√

The House – Your Home

The Rectory, Kings Caple HEREFORD HR1 4TX



The Rectory, Kings Caple, is privately situated, in the village of Kings Caple, and within walking distance the Parish Church of St John The Baptist. It is situated approximately 9 miles south of Hereford City and approximately 7 miles north of Ross on Wye.

The spacious, four bedroom house has oil fired central heating, double glazing, parquet and tiled floors to the ground floor, and carpeted bedrooms. The Rectory has large surrounding garden with a superb, panoramic outlook across adjacent countryside.

The front door, with canopy over, leads into the first entrance hall with an office/study, which is conveniently located away from the private accommodation beyond. A further door opens to the inner hallway giving access to the kitchen and utility room with personnel door to the garage and back door giving access to the rear patio and garden beyond. Ground floor wc; dining room, living room with open fire, and patio doors leading to the garden with beautiful rural views. On the first floor a long landing gives access to four bedrooms; bathroom with shower over the bath, and separate w.c

Outside: Single, attached garage. Large garden. Parking and turning area.

We look forward to welcoming our new Vicar into our Benefice, living and working amongst us.

Our Support for You, should you become our Vicar

We have an experienced team of lay and retired clergy who help to cover a number of responsibilities across the parishes.

We have capable, active and enthusiastic PCCs and parishioners who are ready to share their skills with you.

We also subscribe to the LifeLink Chaplaincy Project and look forward to reaping the benefits of this new initiative.

Our congregations are looking forward to welcoming you and will do what we can to support you.

We will:

- Warmly welcome you (and your family)
- Encourage you to develop a realistic and healthy work life balance
- Encourage and support you in your professional development
- Not expect you to be present for everything we do
- Support and pray for you as you forward for us discern the best way

