

## Vision for the parishes of Somerton, the Charltons, Kingsdon, Long Sutton with Long Load, and Pitney

### ***Our vision is:***

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will share and spread the love of God with all in our communities and in doing so spread the Gospel - the good news of what Jesus has done, and can do, for us.

We aim to achieve this vision by collaboratively *and prayerfully*:

- deepening and growing our individual and collective faith
  - using and developing the range of existing 'lay' and other congregational strengths, talents and capabilities to broaden our mission
  - welcoming all in our communities
  - growing mission for children and young people
  - being alive to the ongoing varying needs of the current congregations
  - striving together with spiritual leadership
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### **Our prayer is for someone who will:**

- be enthusiastic about faith and an excellent communicator
  - be our creative and sensitive spiritual leader, pointing others to Christ.
  - be an effective leader who can encourage and nurture the gifts of individuals, building up, inspiring and expanding the leadership and ministry team
  - be actively involved in the wider life of our local community, especially our schools
  - be able to develop our range of services, using vision and creativity, reflecting our congregational needs
  - walk sensitively with us to make our vision a reality
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## What We Can Offer You

A band of disciples who have pulled together throughout a long vacancy, offering our talents for love of God, and neighbour. Also, a lovely location, including a spacious vicarage which has been a happy family home. A new grouping of parishes which has begun to work together in varied ways, attending some services in each other's churches and also, by praying for and with one another. The challenge of blending a small but growing town with very rural communities.



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## 1 Welcome

Welcome to our beautiful group of parishes, a soon to be Benefice. Somerton, Kingsdon and the Charltons are an existing benefice; Long Sutton with Long Load and Pitney are joining from a different benefice. Ours is a quintessential Somerset landscape, on the edge of the Somerset Levels with its Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

We are quite simply a mix of people who aim to love God, to love one another and are grateful to God for entrusting us to spread the gospel.

As you browse through this material, reading about the area, celebrating what we do well and seeing our challenges, you will notice different styles. This is a deliberate decision to reflect many different authors, across the parishes, writing of topics close to their hearts.

Imagine if you will, a quilt, brought together piece by piece. This is how we have lovingly, and as a team, brought this document together.



So here is our profile. We know it is long and we did consider

a dramatic precis, but all the parishes are rightly proud of things which go on so please do read on. Be assured we are not looking for someone to run all these various things. Rather, for a Godly leader who will empower and encourage existing volunteers, inspire new ones, and unite everyone to aim for a common goal. What a blessing it would be to have a priest who will discern which ministries are fruitful as well as any new ones, and those which may be built on or adapted.

**“Seeing the people, he (Jesus) felt compassion for them because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.”**

Throughout the long vacancies, we have sought to remind each other of the compassion of our Great Shepherd, Jesus. This, whilst trying to

tend and feed not just one another, but those outside of church, has given us the resilience and faithfulness to keep going in our efforts to spread the gospel; the good news of God’s kingdom, right where we live. Yes, we have had to dig deep at times but we hope that the inner strength and mutual support which has brought us thus far will be a blessing to a new priest.

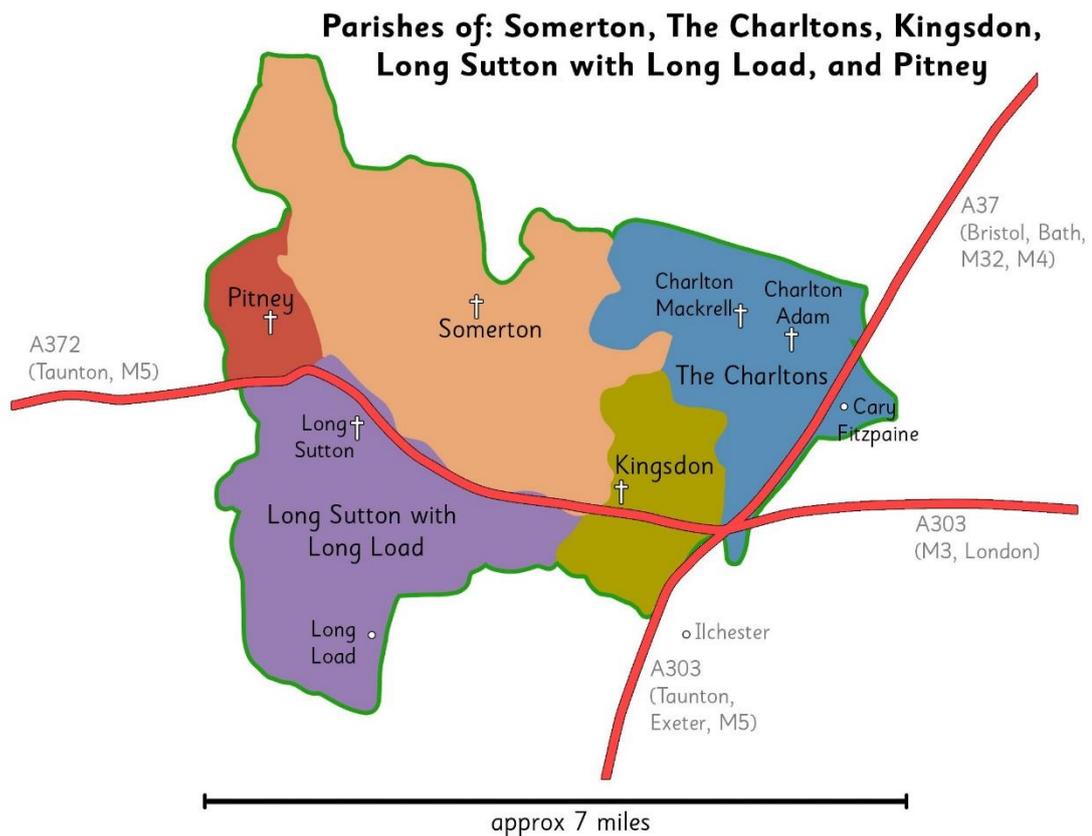
### 1.1 The Area

The road network makes travel by car straightforward, with easy access to A303, A37 and M5 for local day trips including Somerset and Dorset coast, or an event at the Bath and West show ground or Theatre Royal Bath.

It has Somerton for most things we need and is a short distance from the small towns of Langport and Martock. Buses will take you to the larger towns of Yeovil and Taunton, Glastonbury or Street with its Clarks’ Shopping Village; the city of Wells; and slightly further, to Bath and Bristol.

Kingsdon also has a bus service in each direction to Wells and Yeovil.

Yeovil and Castle Cary offer SWR and GWR railway stations, to whisk you towards any metropolis you might choose.



1.2 Local Facilities

Facility	Information
Schools	<p>There are good primary schools in Somerton (Roll 336), Charlton Mackrell (Roll 86), Long Sutton (Roll 105) The only Secondary School is Huish Episcopi Academy (near Langport) 11-18 Years (Roll 1440).</p> <p>Although we only have the one senior school in our area some teenagers attend good independent schools and there are colleges in Street, Yeovil and Taunton.</p>
Shops	<p>Somerton is a small town and has a Coop supermarket and good selection of independent shops. Long Sutton-with-Long Load has a General Shop and Post Office, a farm shop and a cider producing farm (Harry's Cider). Kingsdon has a Community shop. Pitney has a Farm Shop and café. The Charltons currently have no shops.</p>
Public Houses	<p>All parishes have at least one successful pub.</p>
Other Retail	<p>Trading estates; garden centres, fruit farm.</p>
Childcare	<p>Pre-schools at the schools in Somerton, Long Sutton and Charlton Mackrell as well as independent children's nurseries in Somerton.</p>
Village Halls	<p>All parishes have at least one village hall.</p>
Sports	<p>All parishes have a playing field and children's play areas.</p> <p>Somerton: Sports field for tennis, cricket, rugby and football, facilities for indoor sport and activities.</p> <p>Long Sutton: Golf course, Tennis courts, Cricket club, Sports field and facilities for indoor sport and activities</p> <p>Charltons: Sports field, tennis courts, pitches, and facilities for indoor sport and activities.</p> <p>There is a good public gym and swimming pool at the Secondary school in close by Langport.</p>

Facility	Information
Hospitals	Yeovil & Taunton are the main large hospitals. There is also West Mendip Hospital in Glastonbury. South Petherton, Sherborne and Shepton Mallet have hospitals.

See Appendix 1 for demographic statistics.

### 1.3 Words from our Area Dean of Ivelchester

The proposed Benefice of Somerton, with the Charltons, Kingsdon, Long Sutton with Long Load and Pitney is one of the five benefices that make up the historic deanery of Ivelchester (founded in 1218).

The deanery has a population of some 29,000 spread across 180 square miles. The declared worshipping community of the deanery's 26 parishes totalled 574 in 2022.

Across the deanery you will find eight primary schools and two secondary schools. We are looking to welcome three further parishes from the next door Yeovil deanery as part of pastoral re-organisation brought about through changed levels of clergy deployment in the diocese. These three parishes will bring two extra primary schools.

Employment in the deanery is considered 'full' by national measures but like many rural parts of Somerset the incomes generated by households are mixed and dependent on whether high income, skilled aerospace jobs are held or agricultural and 'cottage' industries undertaken.

The opportunities and challenges for parishes to be places of mission and worship are at the heart of both the Deanery Mission Plan and those generated by each parish. The Deanery Mission Plan is one forged by the parishes with the core aims of supporting each other in local mission and worship through enabling partnership and facilitating the development of, and sharing of, ministries.

We are a deanery with really active Lay authorised ministries, Readers, Lay Worship Assistants, Lay Pastoral Assistants, our Wardens and our Lay Dean.

Partnership and the sharing of ministry and experience is a key way in which our parishes are looking to fulfil their calling. The Deanery Chapter recognises its need to model the gifting and sharing of

experience and resources were called for across the parishes. As such, it is hoped that any new incumbent within the deanery will be open to sharing their expertise in enabling and equipping all for their local mission.

Talking of chapter, we are a sociable, prayerful and supportive group of colleagues. We meet every six weeks or so on a rotation about folks' parishes for Communion or Bible Study, and above all for the chance to share and care for each other in our ministry. We also take the opportunity at Easter and Christmas to get to the pub and have a good lunch together.

#### 1.4 The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a four-bedroom detached house situated on the South side of Somerton, located within an easy walk to St Michael's Church and the centre of Somerton. An annex to the house has a separate entrance door, tea and coffee making facilities, cloakroom with internal door to the rest of the house. The internal door can be locked from the house side. The annex is used as the Church Office and meeting room.

At the front of the house there is a large hard surface for parking and a double garage.



At the rear, the garden is mostly lawn with a pond.

Downstairs is a large double aspect living room with fireplace. Also, a cloakroom, kitchen, utility room and sunroom. The utility room contains a gas central heating boiler. The use of electricity is reduced by solar roof panels. Upstairs are four good sized bedrooms (one with built in wardrobes) and a bathroom.



## 2 Prayer, Worship and Discipleship

### 2.1 Regular Sunday Worship

The services across our parishes include a mixture of services that include:

1. Morning Worship
2. Morning Prayer
3. Zoom Morning Prayer
4. Café Church
5. Café Praise
6. Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer (CP) & Common Worship (CW)
7. Evensong
8. Joint Benefice Services

Appendix 4 shows how the above are distributed.

### 2.2 Joint Services

Regular Joint Services are held by Somerton, Charltons and Kingsdon, on the fifth Sundays and Patronal festivals, followed by convivial coffee and fellowship.



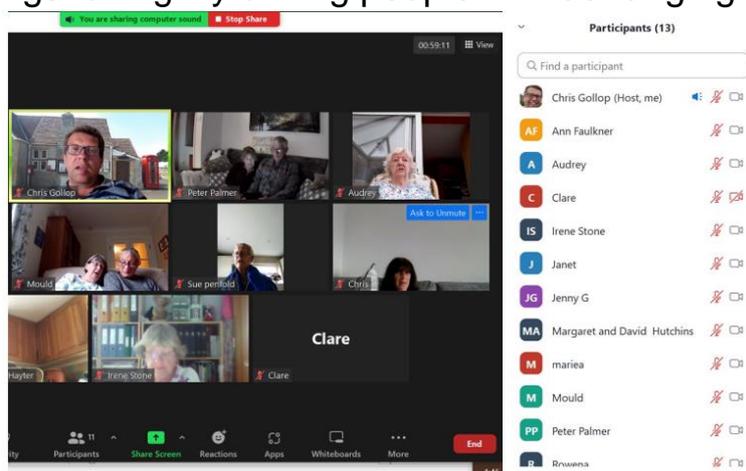
During the years in vacancy there has also been a very strong collaboration and bond between Long Sutton and Pitney. There has been an excellent working relationship between the churchwardens and congregations.

### 2.3 Celebration Choirs

Celebration choirs drawn from the previous benefice have traditionally formed for festivals with Kingsdon having a long tradition of a four part harmony choir. Their Christmas celebration has changed to cater more for younger families with a combined Christingle and carol service. As in pictures - angels attend. Somerton forms a choir, which practises regularly in preparation for the town carol service.

### 2.4 Zoom Worship Evening and Other Zoom Services

Recently dubbed “**a new Christian Community connected to the benefice**” by the Rev. Richard Priestley, the Diocesan Christian Communities Development Lead, the Charltons have been holding ecumenical zoom gatherings fortnightly uniting people in wide ranging



sung praises to our Lord.

Introduced initially to aid worship and fellowship during the pandemic, Pitney together with Long Sutton and the rest of their previous benefice, have been holding regular zoom services which have been led by and organised by their Reader. Numbers peaked at about 45 during the height of the period when alternative church services were unavailable. The format of these zoom led services, now held on the first Sunday of the month, continues to meet a need for some of the people some of the time - there are generally between eight to ten participants.

### 2.5 Prayer Groups across the Benefice.

Regular prayer groups meet in all the parishes including those with specific focus, as in Mothers' Prayers, Monday Prayer Hour, and Friday evening and Saturday morning prayers for our local communities.

## 2.6 Healing Prayer Ministry

There is an opportunity to seek healing prayers for oneself or others at church services in the Charltons and Somerton. Also, to receive the anointing of oil.

“I tell you, whoever believes in me....will do even greater things.... I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the father will be glorified in the Son.” John 14

## 2.7 Monday Prayer Hour

When the previous Somerton incumbent retired, monthly prayer hour was started by a member of the Somerton congregation on the first Monday of every month. In this time of change this gives a clear focus, open to all, and provides reassurance and unity during our long vacancy. It has evolved to include prayer and thanksgiving for subjects on people’s hearts.



## 2.8 Bell Ringers

There are friendly and lively bands of bell ringers in the Charltons, Somerton, Kingsdon and Long Sutton and there are regular weekly practises. They ring for services within our benefice and elsewhere, also for weddings and sometimes for funerals and for major national events such as the Queen’s funeral and King’s coronation.

Somerton is planning to install a new set of ten bells which is fully funded.

It's very rewarding when villagers and parishioners mention that they like to hear the bells ringing.

### 3 Ministries

#### 3.1 Readers and Other Clergy

There are two Readers, also many others who lead worship.

There are local retired and other non-retired clergy who have operated within the parishes during the vacancy.

#### 3.2 Lay Pastoral Assistants, Lay Worship Assistants & Lay Ministry

There are five trained Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAS) prayerfully believing that “Christ having no body here on earth but ours.” Most minister despite and because of their own struggles. Their compassionate LPA ministry continues often by phone, and unofficially. They would love being directed and encouraged by a new priest.

Three Lay Worship Assistants continue to frequently lead congregations in Somerton in worship, their diverse skills and styles being so appreciated. Other lay people have also occasionally assisted.

During the vacancy Kingsdon has taken the opportunity to make PCC led services more child focused with the inclusion of short plays to illustrate content, quizzes, age appropriate addresses. We have been delighted that recently additional members of the congregation have stepped forward to join our list of Bible readers.

Pitney has benefited with contributions from both lay and congregation members leading a variety of services including a monthly cafe church.

#### 3.3 Administrator

The parishes of Somerton, Kingsdon and the Charltons have a shared administrator who works part time to support an incumbent, Reader and retired clergy with admin and printing. Historically, the priest in charge has stated that this helped him focus on other matters. There are aspirations, yet to be negotiated, to include all the parishes.

#### 3.4 Communications

For communication Charltons’ churches provide information about activities, including services, in the village bi-monthly newsletter, on our village email group and sometimes on Facebook. Similarly, Kingsdon uses social media for the increase of God’s Kingdom. There is also the old benefice website.

A monthly newsletter is produced and circulated to Somerton, Kingsdon and the Charltons. Both Pitney and Long Sutton produce monthly newsletters covering both church and a range of other community news and information.

Kingsdon is fortunate to have a volunteer run community shop which acts as a central hub in the village. Church activities along with other village activities are advertised here. A village volunteer holds a database of most villagers (as in the Charltons) and notifies, by email, about all services, activities, points of interest, current local news and so on. The parish benefits from a village magazine which church uses as a platform along with a Christmas card with well wishes and service times.

## 4 Children, Young Families and Schools

### 4.1 Church of England Schools

The proposed Benefice has three Church of England schools

- 1) King Ina Church of England Academy in Somerton
- 2) Charlton Mackrell Church of England Primary School
- 3) Long Sutton Church of England Primary School.



All three schools cater for children from reception age to year 6, when they leave to attend senior schools. Each has a preschool. The Christian ethos of all three Schools is maintained by church members serving as Foundation Governors and visiting schools to help pupils with their learning including the Open the Book teams. The pupils make visits to their local churches for services and celebrate the important days throughout the Christian calendar. All the Headteachers appreciate the support from the Churches. The three Schools are members of a Community Learning Partnership, a federation of twelve primary schools with Huish Episcopi Academy, which provides enrichment activities and support.

### 4.2 King Ina Church of England Academy

King Ina has 336 children on roll in 13 classes with 50 pre-schoolers in 'Owlets.' The Academy now enjoys a new purpose built site with pupils no longer split across sites.

The Academy vision is from Proverbs Chapter 22 verse 6

“Start children off on the way they should go and even when they are old they will not turn from it”.

Its Mission Statement is:

“Within our secure Christian environment, our vision is to develop healthy, happy, motivated learners who aspire to achieve their full potential and who look to the future with confidence.”

King Ina was awarded a grade of outstanding after the last SIAMS inspection.

#### 4.3 Long Sutton School

Long Sutton School has 105 children in four classes and 15 children in the pre-school. The most recent SIAMS inspection report (November 2016) designated Long Sutton Primary School as an Outstanding Church of England School.

The school’s vision is taken from Matthew Chapter 22 Verse 39:

‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself’

At the heart of the school’s Christian ethos is the vision statement ‘Learn to love and love to learn’.

The headteacher is one hundred percent supportive of the school / church relationship and as well as the regular Open the Book assemblies she ensures that, as Year groups and as a school, regular services are attended in church where they can celebrate many of the important days throughout the Christian calendar.



#### 4.4 The Charltons - Charlton Mackrell Church of England Primary School

Charlton Mackrell School has 86 children on roll in four classes. The vision of the school is taken from Proverbs Chapter 19 Verse 8

The Mission statement of CM School is to ensure that every child will love and embrace life and learning.

This next image will hopefully make you smile. Children's responses when asked what they would like in a priest:



#### 4.5 A View from Charlton Mackrell's Head Teacher

"Charlton Mackrell Primary School is a thriving, rural community with 86 pupils in our school and a further 20 in the preschool. Since Revd Brymer and his wife built our school back in 1853 we have always had a wonderful relationship with the church.

Our children enjoy visiting the church most weeks for Open the Book, Harvest, Christmas, Easter and many other joyous occasions. The local church community are incredibly supportive of the school, so we feel very blessed."

#### 4.6 Open the Book



An enthusiastic, ecumenical group of eight volunteers pray, prepare and present dramatized Bible stories around every two to three weeks in Charlton Mackrell and King Ina schools. Cheery pupil actors in abundance. Questions such as “But why did Jesus have to die?” and comments along the lines of “I like it when you dress up and do your little playthings about God.” One of many ways in which church and school continue to pull together.



Long Sutton also has an excellent, established Open the Book team, presenting Bible stories to the whole school in assembly. We firmly believe that the work with the pupils and families is key to growing the church.

#### 4.7 Baptism Visits

There is a small team who provide baptism visits. Whoever is taking the baptism goes to see the family, we make a friendly connection with them and the godparents, gently discussing faith, answering any questions or addressing any worries they might have. We try to be available to attend the baptism to continue to be a friendly face at the church, especially if they are not regular worshippers.



## 5 Mission and Community Activities

### 5.1 Harvests

Harvest festival supper in the Kingsdon village hall, following the Harvest service in the church, is always well attended by villagers and this year the profits went to Cancer Research UK.



Pitney's harvest service was in a barn, amidst grain, with interactive prayers and a community of all ages. We were treated to a fascinating interview with the farmer explaining the crops and farming. The well attended Harvest Supper takes place in the village hall – it is combined with one of the Friday Feasts held every three months.



The Charltons had their All Age Harvest service with lunch in The Reading Room including a seriously impressive squash – see the table centrepiece.



Somerton, and also Long Sutton, hosts a meal after the Harvest service, which is an opportunity for the congregation to eat together to thank the Lord for all the gifts he has provided.

### 5.2 Churches Together in Somerton



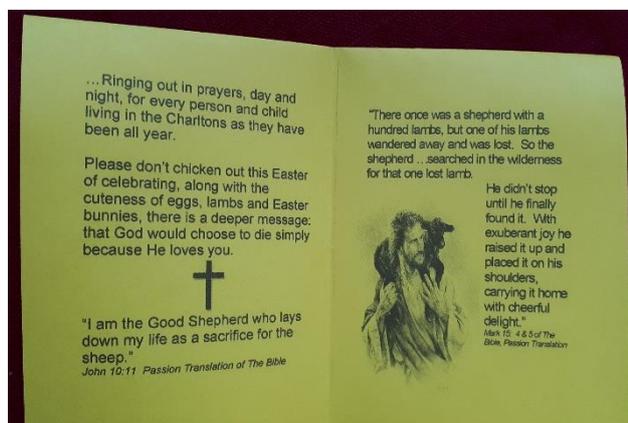
The five churches in Somerton worship together at festival times and during the week of prayer for Christian Unity. Alpha courses are run by 'Churches Together in Somerton' at St Cleers, an independent evangelical church. Leaders of Somerton churches meet for fellowship and prayer.

Another key, and powerful, event is the Easter “Walk of Witness”, illustrated above.

### 5.3 House Drops

In Somerton, House drops are a regular feature around Christmas and Easter reminding people of God’s love and care, the churches’ prayers and welcoming all to services.

For every new resident that moves into Pitney and the Charltons, the church community provides a welcome in the form of some goodies from the local area as well as useful information about the village and of course with a warm invitation from us all at church.



### 5.4 Village Café



The idea was formulated ten years ago as a church fund raiser also serving to bring together villagers for coffee or tea with delicious cake and chat. It has also proved a welcome event for newcomers.

It's run, monthly, in The Charltons' Reading Room. Local groups are encouraged to run the café and benefit from the profits. Amongst these are, School, Village Youth Club, Street Pastors. It has proved popular.

Since July 2006, Long Sutton has held a coffee morning (with produce stall) on the 1st Saturday of the month, raising money for various national and local charities. These are a very important community event in the village, drawing non-church goers as well as regular attendees, to meet and share time together.

### 5.5 Winter Warmer Lunches.

Charltons Winter Warmer lunches which began in 2012, have been a welcome and increasingly popular event with an average of 22 attendees. Four lunches were enjoyed during this last Winter. The volunteer team has remained strong and committed.

In January and February 2023 Pitney offered a ‘warm space’ morning each Monday in the village hall which attracted upwards of 30 village individuals each week – over the period as many as 50 different people joined us. This year we will be offering a similar ‘social hub’ from mid November to the end of February 2024.

5.6 Concerts in St Michael’s

St Michael’s is well equipped to hold concerts to raise funds and provide entertainment for the Town. It has a modern audio and visual system and comfy seats which can accommodate 200 people. Concerts and drama run by St Michael’s have included the Mid Wessex Singers, Jonathan Viera, Oddments Theatre Company and organ recitals. The Church is also used during the Arts Festival week in July, to host musicians from all over the Country.

5.7 Lord’s Larder

Every two or three months, villagers are invited to put non-perishable produce and toiletries in boxes in the porches of both Charlton Adam and Mackrell churches. These are then taken to the Gateway church in Yeovil. This, on village Facebook.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink – Matthew 25 v35



### 5.8 Churchyard Working Parties

Our churchyards are much improved and admired. A Charltons churchyard working party, of five years standing, meets monthly. In 2022, 18 volunteers, many of whom have no other church links dedicated over 149 hours to this worthwhile work.

At St Mary the Virgin in Charlton Mackrell, a wildflower meadow has been allowed to develop and this year again saw wild orchids flowering.



At St John the Baptist, Pitney, our churchyard is well maintained by a group of regular volunteers and the turnout from the village for our annual October churchyard tidy is always well supported. For the past few years we have left a large area uncut in support of local wildlife and this is welcomed by the very active Pitney biodiversity group.

The churchyard of Holy Trinity, Long Sutton is well maintained by regular grass cutting, and on two occasions during the year, volunteers join together to clear and tidy the planted beds, as well as individuals attending on an ad hoc basis.

Similarly, in Kingsdon we are keeping the churchyards as we would wish, introducing re-wilding through the Diocese and Somerset wildlife initiative.

### **Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Diocese of Bath and Wells launch 'Wilder Churches'**

A species survey has been undertaken with the hope that increased biodiversity will be apparent in the next few years.

Somerton churchyard is maintained by contractors.

### 5.9 Other Uses of the Churches

St Michael's hosts events for the town including the Service of Remembrance, an Ecumenical service during the Arts Festival and Father Christmas during the evening when the Christmas lights are switched on, which brightens everyone's lives.

Concerts and community activities are also part of the rural heartbeat.



For example, a recent Castle Cary choir on a beautiful summer evening with refreshments and a concert by our own village choir in Mackrell

church which is large enough to accommodate tiered staging.

All Saints Church is the most ancient building in



Kingsdon and the focal point for worship, being centrally positioned. It is used for many village events including well-attended occasional concerts.

The knitting club has used the church as a venue for creating the poppies used annually for Remembrance Sunday and hosted the working parties for creating the church decorations for the Jubilee and Coronation. Most recently the church was again used as a central hub for the group involved in creating the tapestry commemorating the late Queen.



Long Sutton & Pitney have hosted flower festivals and art exhibitions in our churches and village halls to celebrate important occasions, e.g. the Jubilee and Coronation. Many have come from far and wide to see the beautiful displays.



### 5.10 Organs

For Hymn singing, there is a regular organist with both Charltons, Kingsdon and Long Sutton with Long Load, using occasional recorded media.

Pitney uses pre-recorded accompaniment to assist hymn singing. Pitney has a (relatively modern) electric organ but has limited organist availability - usually for high days and holidays.

Somerton replaced its pipe organ with a digital organ a number of years ago. A Director of Music is employed to play during the services.

## 6 Unique Parishes

### 6.1 Somerton

St Michael's offers a warm welcome to visitors to the town and to residents who call into the church at times of need. The congregation reaches out to the town to spread the love of Gospel in a number of ways:

- Somerton holds a monthly coffee morning on the first Saturday of each month. The recent refurbishment of the Church allows the easy introduction of tables and chairs. The coffee mornings are organised by various Church groups on a rota basis and benefits the Church by raising funds and providing Outreach to people throughout the town.
- A Prayer group meets early each Saturday morning to pray for any issue that is causing concern.
- The 'Caring Hands' team supports anyone in the town who needs help, including lifts to medical 'appointments and after bereavement.
- Each person on the Electoral Roll is part of the Shepherding scheme which looks to provide communication to the congregation. The scheme is based on a pyramid structure with a shepherd looking after around six sheep.
- The Somerton Mothers Union branch is part of a worldwide Christian organisation united in common concern for marriage and family life. Meetings are open to anyone whether married, single or divorced and even men. The branch meets regularly.
- House groups have been created to allow people to study the Bible, share Prayers and socialise.
- Somerton is linked to the Chibondo Parish in Zambia providing prayerful and practical support. In recent years funding has been raised to allow the installation of a pump providing the area with fresh water, an ablution block and helping a student obtain nursing qualifications by providing a laptop computer.
- Leading services in the local care home when required by the CTIS rota.

St Michael's is very grateful to a number of individuals who created registered Charitable trusts or donated legacies to maintain the Church grounds and buildings. A trust which manages a number of buildings and investments provides funds for general maintenance and a legacy

specifically maintains the roof and tower. Together these funds allow the skills of the craftsmen in bygone years to be maintained in their glory for all to admire.

### 6.2 The Charltons

The Charltons ensure people are welcomed in person at the door, have a range of services and encourage laity to participate in worship. Mission is always an item on PCC agendas with ideas sometimes being implemented in church, for example, healing prayer ministry. For the Charltons, there are some important focal points:

1. Communicating/inviting via village email and sometimes Facebook
2. Village cafe, churchyard working party, Winter warmers
3. Pastoral support and outreach to those who come for baptism, weddings, funerals
4. Prayer

Also, the occasional hour of prayer with a specific focus, as in Oct 2023 'for the world' to which villagers are invited.

### 6.3 Kingsdon

Kingsdon church is an active church with numerous events, supported well by the villagers. Their generosity has enabled us to address works highlighted in the last quinquennial report.

'Get to know your Church Day' - a community-led venture includes a barbecue or breakfast, a boules competition in the churchyard, quizzes, referencing features around the building. Also, tower tours (risk assessed) to access the stunning views. All this with tea, cake and children's activities. Gripping talks on the East window stained glass, and the Knight effigy in the North transept.



The flower arranging team is in capable hands with church always looking good.

A recent coffee morning in a villager's home was a popular event providing opportunity for some of our older parishioners to share social time with good company.



Our annual bacon butties fund raising again provides an excellent social event for all ages, raising the church profile.

#### 6.4 Long Sutton

You will always find a warm welcome at Holy Trinity church, Long Sutton. The parish nestles along the luscious green pastures, rivers and waterways of the Somerset Levels. The habitat is abundant. The farming is mainly arable although some dairy farms remain.



The village of Long Sutton (<https://www.longsutton-pc.gov.uk/>) is proud to offer a wide variety of activities. There is a good-sized Village Hall which is extremely busy. It can comfortably hold an

audience of over one hundred who attend the events and concerts held through the year.

We have prayer groups, Evensong, coffee mornings and Holy Trinity church has become well known for hosting a monthly Coffee Morning (first Saturday of the month) and has raised funds for national, local charities and church funds.



#### 6.5 Long Load

Situated on the River Yeo and largely linear, five miles south of Somerton in the South Somerset district.

With 447 residents in 159 homes, some grey blue lias and others hamstone. Also, a large peaceful caravan park. Surrounded by 'levels' there is frequent flooding; Load originating from Lade – watercourse. Popular with walkers and cyclists, the village's centre is its village hall with regular community get-togethers, table tennis, singing and art.

The former church is now privately owned. The cemetery remains part of the church lands, being well looked after and open for visiting. Neighbouring Long Sutton church is welcoming to Long Loaders.

### 6.6 *Pitney*

Pitney is a very welcoming village, a small rural mixed farming community with a population of about 350 people across a broad age range from children to near centenarians. As well as the mostly employed residents with about 50 children aged 16 and under, Pitney also has a vibrant mix of middle aged and retired couples and individuals.

Alongside the older mainly farming families many residents have settled here in the past twenty to thirty years as the old village centric farms have moved to the perimeters and the number of properties has grown from less than 30 to over 170. Nonetheless, or perhaps because of this, Pitney has a very special feel about it based around a community that really does step outside to share with and support each other in so many ways. The village farm shop and café are regular meeting haunts for villagers and visitors alike.

Our church community is seen as relevant and consequently valued and supported by many in the village. The church and village work jointly to provide a range of community events. We see ourselves as being a church focused on serving and supporting our local community. There is an excellent village hall adjacent to the church which we are able to make frequent use of for church and joint village events.





Our monthly Sunday Communion and Café Church services are attended by between 25 and 30 people; our quarterly Friday Feasts often attract between 40 and 50 residents across a wide age range. On the major feast days of Easter and Christmas, but on other occasions too such as Harvest, we can also have congregations in similar higher numbers.

A twice monthly children's church is run for a few under tens – this has persevered following the difficulties during covid with the recent addition of a further dedicated knowledgeable helper.

A weekly bible study group meets.

**We are proud that .....**

- church, the people not just the building, is seen as relevant
- we are being competently self-sufficient in many areas during the interregnum supported by retired clergy and lay readers – we like to think that we're solutions focused rather than problem stumped
- we are open to new ideas and adaptable to change
- we believe our Christian witness makes a real difference to people in Pitney

**But we recognise that** we need and would welcome help from a pastoral person to work alongside us .....

- embracing the nature of our rural life
- encouraging and supporting the existing parish team
- enabling and equipping us to further develop in our discipleship
- and ..... further developing youth work across our linked community of parishes.

## 7 Finances

All five parishes have dedicated treasurers.

Financial positions are shown below.

	Somerton	The Charltons	Kingsdon	Long Sutton & Long Load	Pitney
<b>Parish Share Full/Partial/None</b>	Full	Full	Full	Partial (60%)	Full
<b>Unrestricted Reserves</b>	£22,966	£20,298.43	£21,000	£19,000	£15,091
<b>Restricted Reserves</b>	£526,607	£63,547.48	£7,491	£16,000	£14,928
<b>Registered Charity (Yes/No)</b>	Yes	No	No - only via CoE as too small to be registered	No	No
<b>Gift Aid Scheme and/or planned giving</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Any outstanding or planned building works</b>	The current repairs to the Tower are covered by a restricted fund for the maintenance of the roof and tower	Clock repairs both churches	-	Toilet being evaluated and subject to grant availability.	Some work to remove or further secure pinnacles on top of the tower

Accounts are available upon request.

## 8 Conclusion

We thank you for reading our profile which we hope you found informative, interesting and offering an exciting opportunity. We very much look forward to welcoming a new priest.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Demographics

Parish	Area	population	pop density	Mean age	Christian	included small 'villages'
	Hectares		per Km2		%	
Somerton	2685	5485	192	46.4	57	Hurcott, Etsome, Catsgore, Catcombe
L.Sutton.w. L.Load	2122	1169	54	47.5	63	Knole, Bineham, Upton
Kingsdon	944	366	39	51.2	65.6	
Pitney	850	374	44	46.6	68	
The Charltons	1415	1020	72	46.6	59	West Charlton, Cary Fitzpaine, Welham, Lytes Cary

Appendix 2 - Long Sutton Friendly Society

Long Sutton Friendly Society celebrated its 200-year anniversary of "Club Day" in 2018. Every year since 1818 members have maintained the tradition of walking the village on the first Saturday in June.

Originally formed to provide welfare benefits for its members, as there was no National Insurance, Welfare Benefits or bereavement support in those days.

Club Day starts with the church bells being rung at 6.00am, followed by the annual roll call of Members at the Village Hall.

Headed by the Banner Bearer, Secretary, Chairman and President of the Society - followed by the band and then the members - parade to the church. All gather outside the West Door for the National Anthem and then proceeding into Holy Trinity Church for the annual service, where music again is provided by the band. The banner with its motto 'United we stand, divided we fall' is draped across the altar during the service.

After the service the parade then reforms and the members set off on their walk calling at various houses and farms for refreshments of all kinds.

Today the members hold their annual luncheon at Long Sutton golf club. Guests are invited to the lunch and this tradition is still carried on today, although all contributions made by the guests on the day are now given to local charities.

The annual Christmas tree on the green is donated, erected and lit by the Friendly Society, as is a wreath laid at the War Memorial on Armistice Sunday.

### Appendix 3 – Some Church Histories

#### **St Michael and All Angels, Somerton**



The Church was started in the earlier 1200s and has had updates in the 14th, 15th, 18th and 19th centuries. The most recent in this century was the installation of toilets, a servery, a floor level with the outside path and a modern lighting and sound system.

St Michael's boasts one of the finest wooden roofs in the Country. The 7000 pieces of natural oak were thought to be manufactured in Muchelney Abbey, one of the pieces depicts a cider barrel. The 17th century pulpit and altar table are outstanding pieces of Jacobean craftsmanship. Outside there is a broached octagonal tower and windows installed during the various updates. At the current time the Tower masonry is being repaired to complete work identified during the last Quinquennial survey.

## The Church of St Peter & St Paul, Charlton Adam



There is thought to have been a church here in Saxon times – “Charlton” comes from the Saxon meaning “the settlement of free men” – Charlton Adam is mentioned in the Domesday Book but the earliest reference to a church is in an undated deed executed between 1142 and 1146. However the original structure could have been much older. The tower has a ring of five bells, the oldest being c. 1480-1500, the font is twelfth century, the porch fourteenth century and the present small and very welcoming building is Grade 1 listed.

## The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Charlton Mackrell



In 1217 Ralph de Attebere was instituted to the parsonage of Charlton Mackrell so we celebrated 800 years in 2017. However it is thought that the original building possibly made of wood was replaced in the early part of the fourteenth century following the building of the “North Aisle” (known today as the Lytes Chapel) by William le Lyte 1272 – 1316. The Lytes family of Lytes Cary Manor are thought to have used this chapel long before a chapel was built at the Manor. An unusual feature of the building is the “wry-neck” appearance as the chancel is slightly off-centre to the left. It is Grade 2\* listed.

The building was extensively restored in 1847 by the Rev. W T Parr Brymer, his family’s patronage continued until 1953 when the Bath and Wells Diocesan Board of patronage took over the responsibility. St Mary the Virgin is a large building which serves the community and school opposite both for special services and regular monthly services.

## All Saints, Kingsdon



Historically, the Church was first mentioned in 1242. The building is of blue lias stone with hamstone dressings and the earliest part of the church is believed to be the nave which is of 12th century origin. The 70 ft church tower was added at the west end in the 15th century but had originally been built above the north chapel. The pulpit dates from 1627 and the font bowl is of 12th century origin.

## Holy Trinity Church, Long Sutton



The church was completed in 1493 and is set on the site of an earlier one dating from 1297. The interior is bright and colourful (Simon Jenkins: England's Thousand Best Churches) and shows off an exquisite rood screen and pulpit on a wine-glass stem, incorporating twelve carved apostle figures.



## St John the Baptist, Pitney



The church is 14<sup>th</sup> century, with nave, south transept, chancel, small vestry, south porch and embattled western tower. The lectern and pulpit are Jacobean, the pulpit being carved with the rose and crown for England, lilies for France and realistic thistles for Scotland.

On the outside of the transept roof is the date 1641. The chancel was restored in 1853 when the altar table rails, and choir stalls were placed there. During the restoration work, workmen discovered an exceedingly beautiful open-worked brooch of gilt bronze, The Pitney Brooch which is now on view in the British Museum.

The vestry was added in 1853. Inside the church can be seen a list of Rectors of Pitney since 1311.

Appendix 4 Trial Service Pattern

The following pattern of services has been agreed by all the Church Wardens as a first attempt to provide a range of services across this new group of Parishes, and as such will no doubt be subject to review and modification when the new incumbent has settled in.

WEEK	SOMERTON	CHARLTONS	KINGSDON	LONG SUTTON	PITNEY
1 <sup>st</sup> week Sunday					
9.30			Morning Worship		
10.10					Morning Prayer (Zoom)
11.00	Morning Worship				Holy Communion
18.30				Evensong	
2 <sup>nd</sup> week Sunday					
8.00				Holy Communion BCP	
9.30		Holy Communion			
11.00	Morning Worship				
3 <sup>rd</sup> week Sunday					
9.30			Holy Communion		
10.30					Cafe Church
11.00	Holy Communion				
4 <sup>th</sup> week Sunday					
9.30		Morning Worship			
11.00	Cafe Praise			Holy Communion	
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday					
	Benefice Service Around the Parishes				
Mid-week Wednesdays					
10.00	Holy Communion or Morning Worship			Holy Communion or Morning Prayer	