



Suffragan Bishop of Taunton in the Diocese of Bath and Wells

Information pack - April 2025



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus



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A message from Bishop Michael

Thank you for your interest in the post of Bishop of Taunton in our Diocese of Bath and Wells. Having had the honour of serving as bishop to the wonderful people of Somerset for just over two years, I have been humbled and delighted to witness the way in which people across our diocese, in our churches, schools, and chaplaincy settings, are living and telling the story of Jesus. From the urban centre of Bath, to the smallest hamlet on Exmoor, and all towns and villages in between, I have found people of faith seeking to grow God's kingdom in this beautiful place with devotion, passion and creativity.

We are undoubtedly a place of great diversity. Much of our diocese is rural and working agriculture remains a significant part of our identity. There are communities that are high on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. We call these areas our Magnificat parishes. We have seaside communities and suburbs, market town and city centre communities. Within all these settings we are proud to work with our church schools, which together educate around 60 per cent of our county's primary school children. Our diocese has been a trailblazer in chaplaincy ministry, which extends from our courts to our schools, our town centres to our hedgerows - and many other places besides.

We are all excited for a new Bishop of Taunton to join us as we seek to grow our churches and transform our communities. The diocese has had to manage with just one bishop for sustained periods over the last few years, and while our archdeacons and others have stepped up to provided wonderful support, there is no doubt that having a Bishop of Taunton back among us, one who will join me as pastor to this large and geographically diverse diocese, will be an enormous boost to us all.



My hope is that you could be both a colleague and a critical friend as we share in leading the continual renewal of mission and ministry we are witnessing in so many places across Bath and Wells. You will be joining a Bishop's Staff team that takes great joy in working together to implement the strategic vision of our diocese in these exciting, if challenging times.

I hope you will join me in being a visible presence, and supportive to all in our parishes, schools, chaplaincies and beyond as we bring our vision to life and live and tell the story of Jesus together.

+ Michael Bath & Wells.

Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath and Wells





Our vision and strategy

In response to God's immense love for us, we seek to be God's people, living and telling the story of Jesus.

Extensive work has been undertaken over the last two years to renew the vision of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. We have identified five areas of focus. They are:

1. Valuing, cherishing and developing the people and resources we already have
2. Sharing in ministry and leadership
3. Developing new and existing worshipping communities
4. Growing and deepening in faith
5. Transforming communities



Our vision and strategy ensures the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Bath and Wells aligns with the Church of England's national priorities:

- To be a church that is younger and more diverse.
- To be a church where mixed ecology is the norm – where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, schools and chaplaincies.
- To become a church of missionary disciples where all God's people are released to live the Christian life.

Our mission and ministry are built upon the foundation of the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission. That all we do is underpinned and guided by prayer is of great importance to us.

The role of the Bishop of Taunton

The new Bishop of Taunton will play an essential role in enabling the implementation of our vision. They will have defined responsibility for taking forward a number of key and clearly delineated areas of activity.

Purpose

To offer enabling, effective, inspiring and transformational episcopal leadership in the Diocese of Bath and Wells in close collaboration and partnership with the Bishop of Bath and Wells and working as an integral part of the Bishop's Staff team.

Priorities of role

- To be alongside the Bishop of Bath and Wells, sharing in his ministry as chief pastor of our diocese.
- To share in leading mission and ministry across our diocese through supporting the implementation of our strategic vision in the parishes, chaplaincies and schools of Bath and Wells.

Loving God

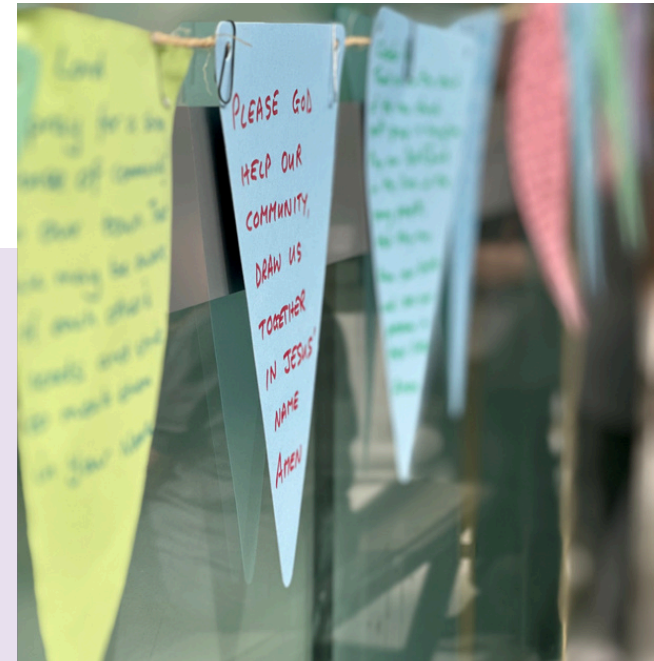
You alone bring growth to your Church and transformation to our communities.

We give thanks for the ways in which you are already at work in our lives and world.

As we look to the future, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and grace in living and telling your story.

Help our churches to grow in commitment to you, in numbers and diversity, and in partnership with our local communities in all that gives life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen





Main responsibilities

Providing leadership

The Bishop of Taunton will be an effective and visible leader, as well as a colleague and critical friend to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. They will play a full part in the collegial life of the Bishop's Staff team, sharing in the leadership, oversight and development of the diocese.

They will engage effectively with leaders, both lay and ordained, across the diocese, offering ministry that supports the life and mission of churches through the pastoral care of clergy and other ministers. They will participate in appointments and licensings, conduct of Benefice Visits and Ministerial Development Reviews. They will have a love for the people to whom they are sent and will not take themselves too seriously. They will be approachable and delight in being accessible to all.

Our new bishop will be a confident, joyful inspiring presence in the public square. They will take up opportunities that the Church in Somerset still has to be a convener and trusted partner in seeking the common good. They will be confident to speak up for the Good News of Jesus Christ in different settings, taking opportunities as those arise.

The Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Implementing our vision

Transforming communities

During the last two years, significant progress has been made on the first four areas of our vision (see box on page five) and we now have detailed plans for how we aim to achieve agreed outcomes for these priorities. The emphasis our new Bishop of Taunton will offer is to provide particular strategic leadership of our fifth area of focus, transforming communities, that seeks to enable our churches, schools and chaplaincies to work with local partners to be Good News in local areas. This will entail giving leadership to the diocese as we reflect on how we respond to the last three of the five Marks of Mission, which underpin our activity.

We want to see transforming communities and growing churches as two sides of the same coin. The Bishop of Taunton will lead our work to gather information on what parishes are already doing and identify the range of needs across our diocese. They will play a key role in helping us consider what activities need to be prioritised and what outcomes we need to focus on delivering, as well as prioritising issues in our society to which specific attention should be given.

Championing children and young people

The Bishop of Taunton will work with the Diocesan Board of Education to review our vision and outcomes for our Church of England schools. With our Education and Children and Young People teams, they will ensure that children, young people and schools are fully supported and encouraged to grow in discipleship and Christian life.

Providing vocational support

A key strand of our strategy, which the Bishop of Taunton will support, is the development of vocational pathways towards ordained and other ministries that will help us deliver our strategic priority of enabling shared local ministry across our diocese. This will include becoming the sponsoring bishop for ordinands in our diocese. They will also help us develop leadership pipelines for different groups, including young people.



Supporting wellbeing

As we value, cherish and develop the people and resources we have, the Bishop of Taunton will have oversight of our work in ministerial wellbeing - supporting clergy, Readers and other ministers to help them to flourish in their roles, and be a pastor to those experiencing times of particular need.

Helping us to be...

A safer church

The diocese has just been audited by INEQE as part of the national safeguarding audit of all dioceses. While initial feedback has been positive and constructive, we recognise we cannot be complacent and the Bishop of Taunton will play a key role in supporting the implementation of any recommendations, helping us to grow a healthy culture that supports safeguarding that enables all to flourish. They will model the role of all leaders in exercising responsibility for safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the provision of pastoral care of survivors, in line with the safeguarding policies of the Church of England.

A generous church

The Bishop of Taunton will take an active role in promoting generous giving and good stewardship in our churches to ensure we can secure our financial sustainability for ministry and mission across our diocese.

A visible church

Through sharing in the ministry of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Bishop of Taunton will proclaim the Christian faith with confidence, in preaching, through media engagement and in any other appropriate ways.



A connected church

The Diocese of Bath and Wells has enjoyed an active link with the dioceses of Zambia for almost 50 years. Our link has many local expressions but is in need of renewal. Our new Bishop of Taunton will help us develop new expressions of our link, preparing us for the next 50 years.

The Bishop of Taunton will also assist in nurturing our connections and help us improve our mutual understanding through participation in the Church of England's College of Bishops, through meetings of the south west regional bishops, engagement with the ecumenical gatherings of the Somerset Church leaders and interfaith engagement within our county.



Person specification

We seek someone who, in the following areas:

Spiritual life

- is confident in Christ, and grounded in their life of prayer.
- at home in their own church tradition but who rejoices in the breadth of the Church of England.
- loves the scriptures and has a passion to communicate their message of God's love.

Theology

- theologically literate; educated in theology at least to degree level; and is capable of creative and innovative theological reflection that is faithful to Christian tradition.
- can articulate and communicate a clear and compelling theology of mission and ministry enabling others to be curious and engaged.

Vision for mission and delivery

- has a clear desire to see our churches grow and transform our communities.
- demonstrates evidence of engagement in innovative and fruitful mission and ministry, ideally in a parish context.
- has a track record of change and growth in a significant area of church life.

Formation of others

- delights in exercising positive creative influence over others that allows them to explore and develop their vocation and fulfil their potential in Christ.

Safeguarding

- takes safeguarding issues with the utmost seriousness which they warrant, understanding the role of a suffragan in this area, working with their colleagues on the Bishop's Staff and the diocesan safeguarding teams..

Young people and education

- has experience which includes ministry or leadership positively linked with education, children and youth work.

Leadership and oversight of others

- is a self-aware leader who eschews deference and enjoys working as part of a team.
- is patient, kind-hearted and resilient. Able to deal positively but decisively with challenge and conflict.
- is aware of the dynamics of power and their possible abuse and who always seeks the flourishing of others.

Engagement in community life and public issues

- is a confident articulator of the Christian faith, relating it well to issues of contemporary concern and can address a range of audiences with both charity and clarity.
- is a trusted partner with those in wider society and has a clear record as such.
- able to work across different settings including the deeply rural and the marginalised and disadvantaged.

Diversity and inclusion

- will help us have a stronger emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusion within the diocese, including addressing racial injustice, disability inclusion, and LGBTQ+ issues, in line with the Church of England's broader commitments.
- is comfortable sitting in places of ambiguity and disagreement, respecting and affirming different integrities in relation to Living and Love and Faith (LLF) and Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF).

Working with others

- is sufficiently self-aware and emotionally intelligent to be able to form strong, purposeful and fruitful relationships both with individuals and teams.

Management of resources and structures

- is experienced in issues of organisational leadership and financial discipline, understanding due accountability and is confident in exercising 'cabinet' responsibility.



Our Diocese of Bath and Wells

The Diocese of Bath and Wells broadly encompasses the historic county of Somerset, extending to include a small part of the county of Dorset. It is a diverse region with more than 500 settlements across the county. Although two thirds of Somerset is rural, more than half the population lives in urban areas.

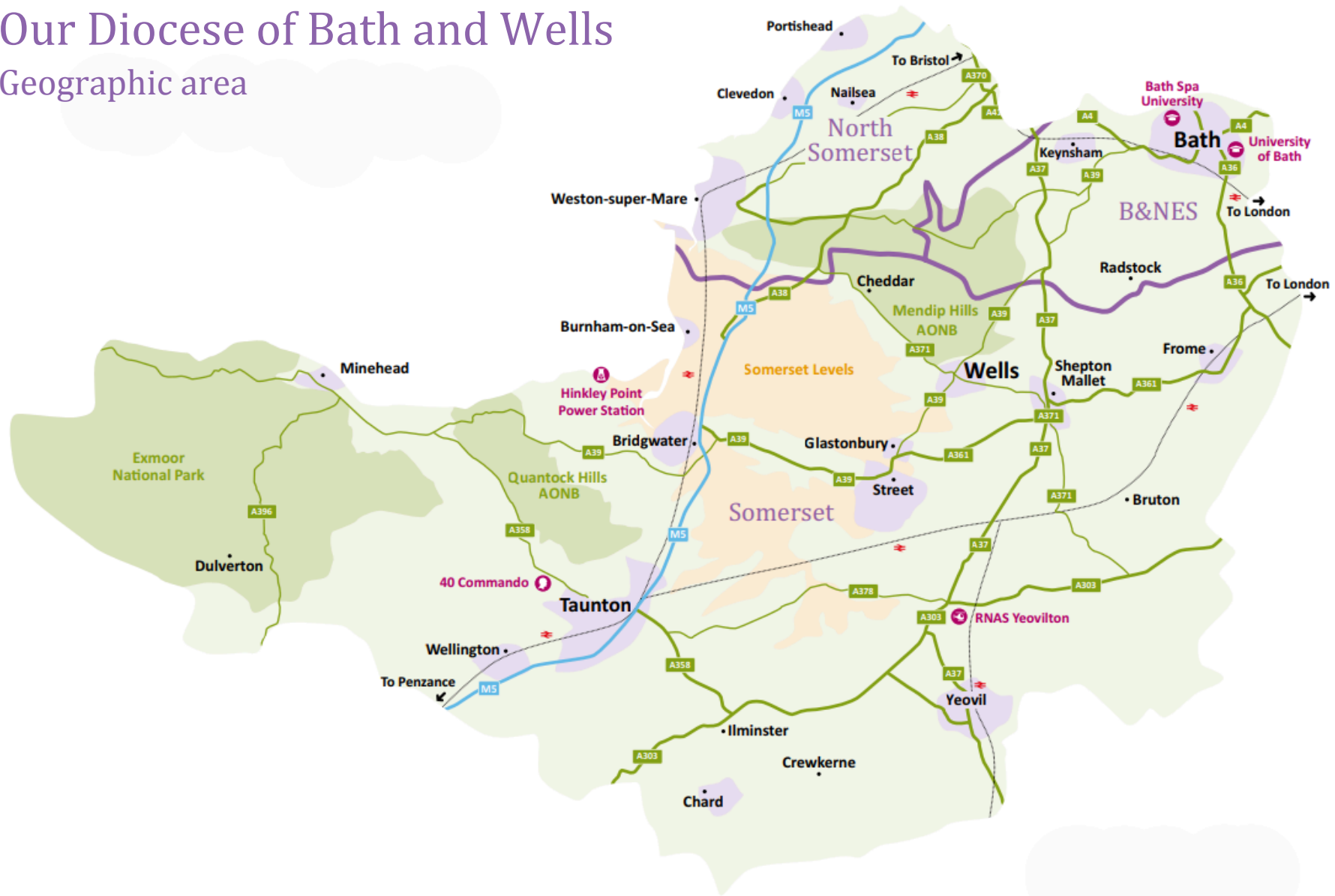
The diocese loves and serves in the region of 1,000,000 people who live here through its family of 485 parishes and 182 church schools and more than 170 chaplaincies. This family works for the good of local communities in a range of practical and pastoral ways, caring for the vulnerable, supporting families and encouraging children and young people.

The diocese is split into three areas: the archdeaconries of Bath, Wells and Taunton. There are 158 stipendiary clergy posts, 53 self-supporting licensed clergy, 155 licensed Readers and many lay people exercising ministry within and beyond the church walls.



Our Diocese of Bath and Wells

Geographic area



Our Diocese of Bath and Wells

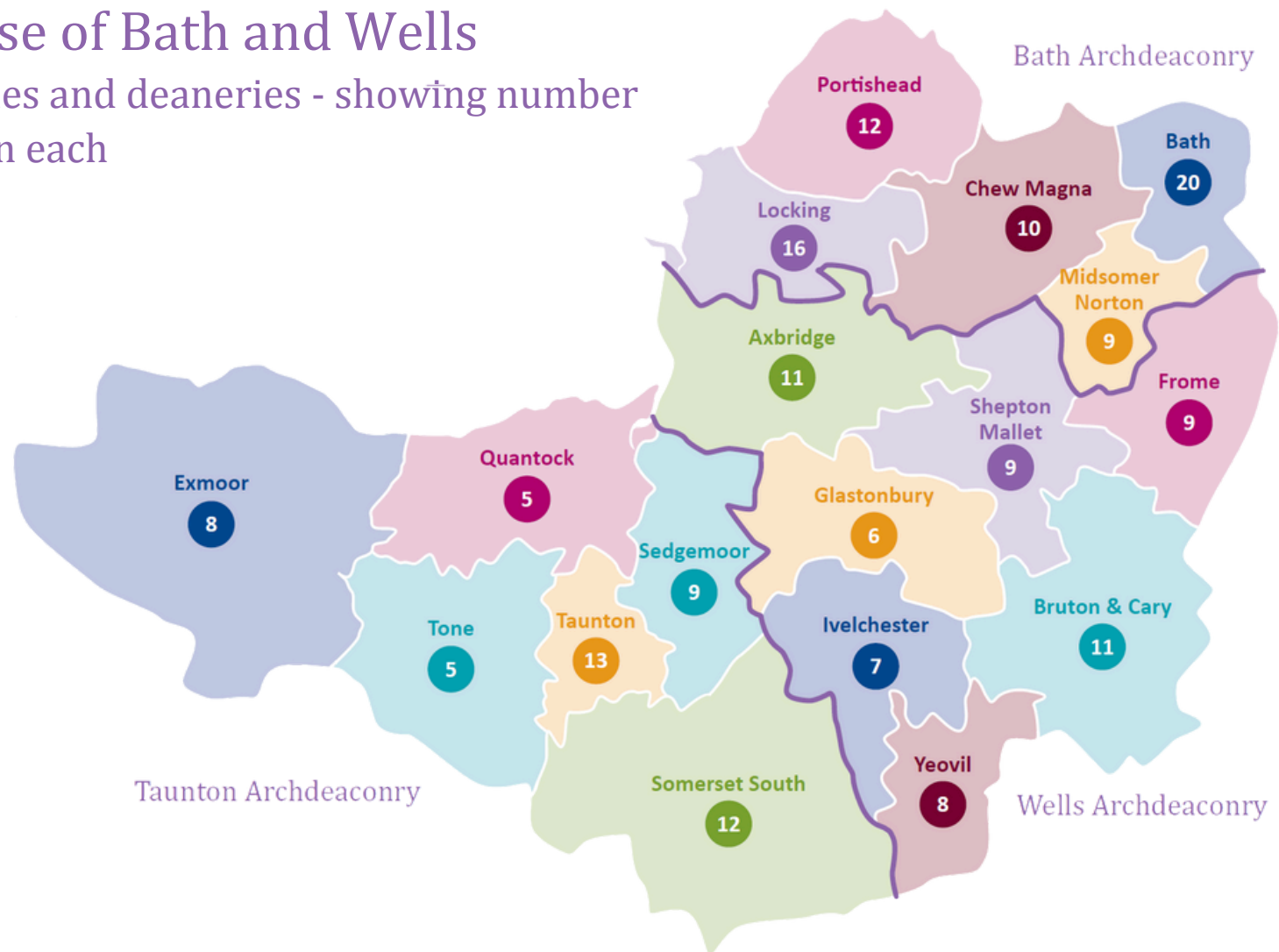
In numbers

Geographical area	1,610 sq miles
Population	1,000,000
Archdeaconries	3
Deaneries	18
Benefices	160
Parishes	485
Churches	564

Population per church	1,773
Percentage of GMH population	3.2%
Stipendiary clergy	158
Ordained self-supporting ministers	53
Chaplains (including lay chaplains)	99
Percentage of women incumbents	33%
PTO clergy	324
Readers	155
Bishop's Mission Orders	2

Our Diocese of Bath and Wells

Archdeaconries and deaneries - showing number of benefices in each



Our Bishop's Staff team



Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath & Wells



Jenny Hollingsworth
Diocesan Secretary



Anne Gell
Archdeacon of Wells



Charlie Peer
Archdeacon of Bath



Simon Hill
Archdeacon of Taunton



Toby Wright
Dean of Wells



Julia Hill
Head of Mission Support
& Ministry Development



Ed Gregory,
Director of
Education



Matthew Pinnock,
Head of Finance
and Operations



Kate Scott
Bishops' Chaplain &
Adviser

Elizabeth Renshaw-Ames
is Chair of the Board of
Finance for the Diocese of
Bath and Wells.





Additional information

Stipend

The stipend is set at the national level for a suffragan bishop of £43,620 per annum. Holidays and expenses are paid according to the guidelines laid down by the Church Commissioners for suffragan bishops. The new Bishop of Taunton will be expected to comply with the regulations for common tenure and the associated terms of service.

Housing and office space

It is proposed that the successful candidate should live and work out of Wells.

Interviews

Interviews are planned to take place on 30/31 July in Bath and Wells.

Eligibility & pre-employment enquiries

The nominated candidates will need to have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom. They will need to complete an Enhanced DBS check and a pre-appointment occupational health clearance.

Induction and development

The nominated candidate will be required to attend safeguarding training, prior to consecration. There will also be a series of other induction meetings to help him/her begin the new role. In addition, there is training for bishops provided at national level.





Safeguarding

Experience of your competence in managing safeguarding forms a key part of the discernment process, as well as enquiries to reassure the appointing panel that you are not a safeguarding risk.

You will be asked to complete a confidential declaration and your bishop will provide a Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL), prior to interview, having examined your blue file. Your referees are also asked to comment on your approach to managing safeguarding.

In the event of safeguarding concerns being raised, the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments will liaise with your bishop, the appointing bishop and the National Safeguarding Team (NST) for advice and direction on how to proceed. If any issues raised cannot be resolved within the timescales for the appointment process, you may be asked to withdraw.

Consecration

If the nominated candidate is not already in episcopal orders, their consecration will possibly take place in October 2025 or early 2026 and welcomed to the diocese soon afterwards.



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