

***The Benefice of Porlock,  
Porlock Weir & Stoke Pero with  
Selworthy and Luccombe***



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**Welcome** -We are delighted that this profile has caught your eye. We are praying for the right person to be our Rector and to lead us in our ministry, worship and spiritual growth in this benefice, and we ask you to consider prayerfully if you might be that person.

### **A Prayer for The Time of Vacancy**

*Heavenly Father, during this vacancy, guard and grow this benefice, unite us as we serve you together in this period without a Rector.*

*Lord Jesus, we know that you have plans for us and that these plans are good. We ask now that you will help us to share responsibility, grow in faith, love one another, care for those in need, reach out to others, and welcome newcomers.*

*Holy Spirit, please guide those who are seeking the right person for us, and those who are seeking the right place for their ministry, that together we may discover your way for the future and see your kingdom grow.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

### **Our Vision**

*To Worship and Celebrate the Glory of God in  
Our Churches, Communities and In Creation;  
loving and caring for all as Jesus taught.*

## Our Priorities

### Worshipping God

- Growing and cherishing a wide range of worship including traditional (BCP) services, Common Worship, Ecumenical Services and modern and accessible services for both adults and children.

### Working together

- To work harmoniously as a benefice: caring for and supporting each other, finding the places to grow together and celebrating where there is diversity

### Joining in with God's mission

- To maintain, build on and develop all the links we have with our communities:
  - With the school
  - With families
  - With the elderly and lonely.

### Caring for our churches

- To look after our beautiful buildings and our faithful congregations
  - put our churches on a sounder financial footing
  - maintain and improve our beautiful buildings.

## Our Hopes

### A Rector who will

- support and encourage our lay and ordained teams, allowing the gifts of all to be respected, recognised and used.
- be someone who can collaborate and communicate well.
- believe in all that we profess in our creed and deepen our faith through worship, the study of scripture, prayer and teaching, helping us learn and share that faith with our community, and more widely, in a gentle and respectful way.
- lead us in maintaining and extending work in the school and in the community with children and young people; building relationships with families.
- feel an affinity for rural life and participate with joy in the things that matter to us.

## **About the Benefice**

All the parishes of this benefice lie within the beautiful Vale of Porlock in Exmoor National Park. It is a very picturesque area with moorland, woodland, marshland, a harbour, rivers and the glorious South West Coast Path. It is an ideal area for walkers, riders, cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts. There are cosy pubs in Porlock, and the area has a number of fine restaurants and pretty tearooms. There are a variety of shops including post offices in Porlock and Allerford. Larger shops are available in Minehead about 15 minutes drive from Porlock.

### *Vale of Porlock*



The nearest town is Minehead. Public transport is limited. There is a Porlock to Minehead bus service but the nearest mainline station and motorway link are about an hour's drive away at Taunton or Bridgewater. We are a rural and coastal community of approximately 2,500 inhabitants.

Employment is mainly in agriculture and tourism. We are very much in tune with the farming year, and riding, field sports and outdoor pursuits are an important feature of life here.

The National Trust and Porlock Manor Estate own many of the attractive and historic cottages and farms. There are at least two housing associations providing affordable and social housing in the area and some dedicated housing for the elderly. There is an Abbeyfield Residential Home for the elderly on Porlock High Street. This is managed by a committee of volunteers.

The population is more than 40% of pensionable age. Nonetheless, we are an active and thriving community with many social groups and community events and good community facilities including a library and visitor centre, halls and recreation grounds.

**Education** Children's education in the area is in a three-tier system. There is a choice of first schools (for years reception to year 4 inclusive) with one in Porlock and one in Timberscombe, also just outside the benefice, two in Minehead, one in Cutcombe and one in Dunster. All but one of the schools are C. of E. schools. The Middle Schools (years 5 to 8 inc.) and the Senior school (years 9 to 13 inc.) are situated in Minehead and Alcombe, respectively.

St. Dubricius C of E First School, ( approximately 80 pupils), in Porlock, has close links with the church. It has its own nursery class and works closely with a local playgroup. We are very blessed to have an office / meeting room in the school's Oak Wing and the services of an excellent administrator Rachel Kingdon (10 hours). Being in the school building has strengthened our relationship with the school.

**Selworthy Parish** has three churches – the main church at Selworthy - All Saints, known as the Cathedral of the Moor, a Chapel of Ease - Lynch Chapel and a small thatched church at Tivington which is owned by The National Trust.

**Luccombe Parish** has one church, St. Mary the Virgin.

Selworthy and Luccombe joined with Porlock to become a Benefice in 2007.

**Porlock Parish** has three churches. St. Dubricius' Church has the largest congregation of the benefice. The two smaller churches - St. Nicholas at Porlock Weir and Stoke Pero ( which is quite remote) are now used as Festival Churches and receive regular visitors as they are always open. Both are licensed for weddings.

**The Rectory** is in the very centre of the village of Porlock, in Parson Street. It is an attractive house about 100 metres from the church and a little closer to the village C. of E. first school. It was built in the 70's in the grounds of the Old Rectory which was very large indeed and its entrance is through the old stables.

The Rectory has a large garden and driveway and a large double garage. It is 4 bedroomed and has a large breakfast/kitchen, utility room, dining room, lounge and study. There is bathroom and a shower room with toilet upstairs and a downstairs toilet. There is good storage upstairs.

It has solar panels and central heating, and a wood burning stove in the lounge.

## Our Ministry Team

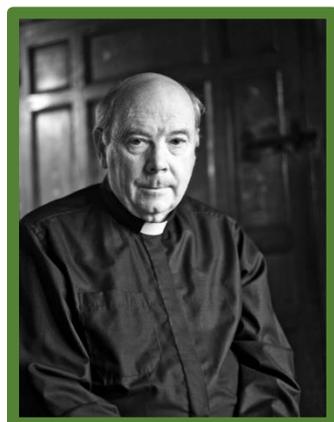
### **The Reverend Ann Gibbs - Curate**

I moved to Porlock 25 years ago with my family. My three boys all grew up here - I can't think of a better place. Several years ago I began to realise that I had a calling to ordination and I was ordained in 2017. Prior to that I had been a teacher for nearly 30 years. Currently I co-ordinate our local food bank and give the rest of my time to my work as a curate in this benefice. I enjoy working in a team and long for others to know the love of God that sustains me. Developing strong links between the parishes and with our communities is really important to me.



### **The Reverend Stephen Humphreys**

I was born in Zimbabwe where my parents were farmers. At the end of the 1950s we returned to England so that I could go to school. In 1961 they bought a farm on Exmoor and we have lived here ever since. I studied Theology at King's College, London. In 1976 I was ordained and served my title in a parish in North London. My second curacy was in the diocese of Bradford, followed by time as a hospital chaplain and then as Precentor of Leeds Parish Church. For the last twenty years I have cared for the people of Luccombe and Selworthy in the benefice of Porlock.



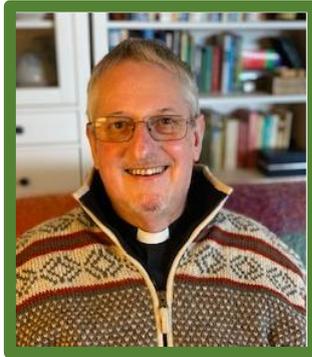
I look forward to retiring from some of my responsibilities when I reach 70 in 2022 (or before, if the new Rector wishes!) I am especially interested in the spread of Christianity in the late Roman world and the development of doctrine during that time. It provides a useful perspective for understanding some of the current trends in the Church of England.

## Mrs Rosemary Ball – Licensed Reader



I originate from Kent and moved with my husband, Bill, to **Porlock in 2001. I was authorised a Pastoral Assistant in 1989** and also Reader in 1996, both in Rochester, being transferred and re-licensed a Reader in Bath & Wells in 2002. I feel Spirit led in all I do, enjoy being part of a team and especially fulfilled working on our Church Charities Committee which enables us to witness to and carry out Jesus' commission of caring for others.

## The Reverend John Rogers



Retiring from full time Ministry in Tilehurst nr Reading, my wife Jan & I were delighted to be welcomed by the congregation of St Dubricius in 2017. Living in our wonderful National Trust cottage on Selworthy Green, it has been a privilege to celebrate the sacraments and preach in Porlock and to work with other members of the Benefice Ministry Team. Whilst appreciating the diversity of Theological focus it has been a real joy to be inspired by the spiritual depth of Lay Members from Porlock Churches Together and by the preparations of our Celebrate services which has highlighted the value of services of the Word

## Our Administrator - Rachel Kingdon



Our, very efficient, administrator Rachel, works at our Oak Wing Office from 9.30 -11.30am each weekday morning. She edits our Benefice Magazine - **InTouch**.

In the past, the parishes of the benefice have worked fairly independently of one another but we have, more recently, come together to discuss our joint future and would like to work together more. We envisage becoming a united benefice celebrating what we have in common whilst maintaining our diverse styles of worship.

## Pattern of Services

	St Dubricius, Porlock	All Saints Selworthy	St. Mary's Luccombe
First Sunday	8am HC BCP 10.30am HC CW	11am Matins BCP followed by HC	9.30am HC BCP
Second Sunday	8 am HC BCP 10.30 am MP CW	11am HC BCP	9:30am HC CW
Third Sunday	8 am HC BCP 10.30 am HC CW	11am Matins BCP	9:30am Matins BCP
Fourth Sunday	8 am HC BCP 10.45am Celebrate Together - An Ecumenical Service Often Lay Led	11 am HC BCP	9:30am HC CW
Fifth Sundays	10.30am HC CW	11am HC BCP	9:30am HC CW

**Abbreviations:** *BCP Book of Common Prayer, HC Holy Communion, CW Common Worship, MP morning Prayer*

We are aware the service pattern may have to change and are willing to be flexible.

Prior to lockdown, most services at Selworthy and Luccombe were celebrated by **Reverend Stephen Humphreys** (an SSM), though before the interregnum the Rector celebrated a service monthly and currently, the **Reverend Ann Gibbs** (an SSM) also celebrates a regular monthly service on the 2nd Sunday when Covid regulations allow.

**Lynch Chapel** is well attended throughout the year because of its accessibility. Dates and times of service vary according to the seasons becoming less during the winter months.

Prior to the interregnum and lockdown, services at **St. Dubricius' Church** in Porlock, were conducted by **the Rector**, our curate **Reverend Ann Gibbs (an SSM)**, our Licensed Reader **Mrs. Rosemary Ball** (monthly morning prayer and occasional other services.) or a **team of lay people & clergy** representing Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans & Baptists (monthly ecumenical service in either the Methodist Church or St. Dubricius).

**Reverend John Rogers** (retired priest) covers services fairly often, and other retired priests provide occasional cover.

Neither **St. Nicholas** nor **Stoke Pero** churches have regular congregations but occasional services are held, usually at festivals.

## Statistics

Church	Electoral Roll	Baptisms 2019	Weddings 2019	Funerals 2019
St. Dubricius' Porlock	60	1	1	10
St. Mary's Luccombe	13	1	0	1
All Saints, Selworthy	41	1	6	7
St. Nicholas - Porlock Weir	N/A	0	0	0
Stoke Pero Church	N/A	0	0	0

### Children's Work in this Benefice

All the churches of the Benefice welcome children at their services but it is relatively rare to have children at our normal services though at special services it is more likely. At St. Mary's Luccombe and at St. Dubricius, Porlock we have a children's area in the church and children are welcome to play in these areas and to use the resources whenever the church is open. At St. Dubricius, activity bags are available to take into the pews if children prefer to do that. We also have children's Bibles and prayer books available and activity sheets for them to use or take home.

We work closely with our local church school - (St. Dubricius' First school) - and have a Church/School Worship team which leads regular assemblies. We run an **After-School Club – Jesus And Me (JAM)** - numbers vary but are usually around 12. We have frequent visits to church and services for the school.

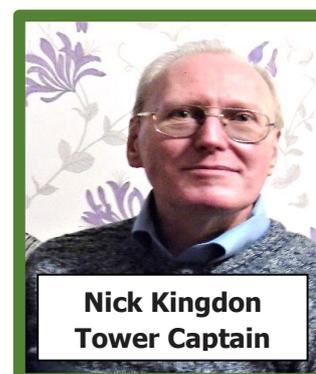
We also run a **Saturday Club** which is a junior youth club for children aged 5 -13 years from anywhere in our benefice – numbers on roll are about 12 with a regular attendance of 9. It meets, mostly at St. Dubricius' church but also visits the other villages and churches.

### Bell Ringing in the Benefice

Within the Benefice of Porlock we have 4 rings of bells, 3 bells at Stoke Pero and 6 bells each at Porlock, Luccombe and Selworthy. They are all of an average size, in safe, working order, yet always in need of maintenance

We have a band of about 7 regular ringers and 2 current learners based in Porlock, made up of church worshippers and villagers. Ringing takes place each Sunday with a Wednesday ringing practice.

This band is regularly augmented by other ringing friends in the area to cover less regular ringing at our other three churches for special services and weddings.



## Porlock Parish Profile

### St. Dubricius, St. Nicholas and Stoke Pero Churches



**St. Dubricius' Church** lies at the centre of the village of Porlock and at the heart of the community. It is on the corner of Parson Street and the High Street and immediately adjacent to St. Dubricius' First School with a communicating gate between the two. The church is much loved by the village, and the community expect it to be there for them at all the important moments of life whether they be happy or tragic events locally, nationally, or internationally.

#### **Covid Response**

The people of Porlock are warm and welcoming and the community is busy and active with lots of community events, societies and clubs. The community comes together in times of need; recently the whole community including the church took part in a massive and successful campaign to retain our local Fire Station.

During this time of pandemic, the village and surrounding community have been incredibly positive finding innumerable ways to counter loneliness, raise spirits, provide for those shielding and vulnerable, and to care for each other.

Whenever possible the church has continued all its usual activities in some form. Whether it be socially distanced or zoom services led (since the Rectors departure) by our curate Ann - or our Open-Door Coffee morning held out of doors in the Memorial Garden. We have continued house groups by zoom where possible, met to pray in gardens when we could, looked out for our neighbours and congregation with

phone calls, doorstep visits, shopping etc., and kept in touch with our school and clubs in whatever way possible.

Reverend Ann has produced a regular item for The Exmoor Magazine, which also appears on Facebook. She sends out printed services to those who don't zoom.

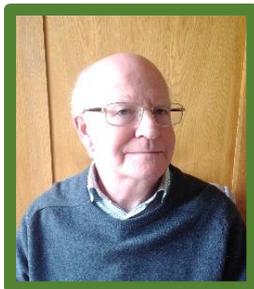
Our administrator Rachel Kingdon has kept up our pew sheet and parish magazine on line and again printed copies have gone to those who don't do online.

Our congregation too, are warm, welcoming and supportive. Most, though not all, are retired or early retired and many give generously of their time as volunteers in all areas of our many endeavours.

### **Our Consultation Process**

In Porlock, the congregation, community and the school were consulted about their feelings about the church, its role in the community and school, how it should develop and what qualities a new rector should bring to the role. We had a very good response to this consultation receiving 40 + replies some of them via telephone. The results of these consultations are summarised in the appendices and have informed this profile document. We think that the full consultation responses will provide an important guide to our future planning.

### **Our Church Wardens**



MALCOLM BLEASBY

Malcolm has served as churchwarden for 2 1/2 years and Martin has recently been re-elected having been a churchwarden for several years prior to Malcolm's term.



MARTIN SPENCE

### **Our worship and music**

As you will note from the table in the Benefice section, our pattern of worship at St. Dubricius, Porlock is a mixture of Book of Common Prayer. Common Worship



and our more informal and largely lay led Celebrate services which we share with our Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic friends.

***The Sunrise at Easter Dawn Service  
on  
The Beach at Porlock Weir***

The 8am BCP services are usually said Holy Communion, and the 10.30am Common Worship services are sung Holy Communion, using seasonal booklets to facilitate our engagement with the liturgy. Once a month, on the second Sunday we enjoy sung Morning Prayer and on the fourth Sunday of the month our joint Celebrate services alternate every month between St Dubricius and Porlock Methodist churches. At these our worship is enhanced by the contribution from a talented music group from both churches. On the evening of that Sunday we offer a service of Holy Communion with anointing and laying on of hands.

Our worship has been thoughtfully led by the Rector, Self-Supporting Priest Ann Gibbs, Reader Rosemary Ball, retired Priest John Rogers and occasionally other visiting retired clergy, our Celebrate group, all of whom are helpfully supported by our organist Stephen Kingdon together with our choir.

We appreciate the contribution from intercessors, readers of the word, lay Eucharist Assistants and the congregation is welcomed by our sides people. Our building is well presented through the valuable contribution of our teams of cleaners and flower arrangers and the volunteers that supervise the children's play area at the back of church. Regular worshippers and visitors are made very welcome and encouraged to join in fellowship after the main morning services with coffee/tea/squash and biscuits.

## **Our Strengths**

### **Music/Choir**



Stephen Kingdon - Our Organist/Choir leader has been in post since April 2018

He has worked with our Clergy to make music in our worship more refreshing. We now use Ancient and Modern Hymns for refreshing worship, as our main hymn book but use hymns from other sources as well. We have a small very friendly robed Choir who sing at most services using music from Margaret Rizza, Bernadette Farrell, John Bell, Taize, and others. A couple of times a year we have local musicians come and join us so

that we can put on larger choral events.

### **House/Prayer Groups**

There are two active house groups in the parish for studying the Bible, prayer and discussion - Hawkcombe Group and Orchard House Group. Hawkcombe Group has continued via zoom during lockdown and others have joined them. We also had a group led by our Rector's wife but this is not active at present. In the past we have had Exploring Christianity and Alpha courses running. All are Ecumenical groups and welcome new members. Me & U is a monthly prayer group which meets in church in our prayer area. It is open to all. Me & U is currently looking for a new leader, as our Licensed Reader Rosemary is taking a step back, but it will doubtless continue.

**Churches Together In Porlock** has been running for many years. It is a group comprising members of the Christian denominations represented in the villages. The group organise and plan the regular Celebrate service, a bi-monthly Sunday Evening Taize service, Lent and Advent study courses and Lent lunches, Good Friday Walk of Witness and other Easter Meditations, and World Day of Prayer. They also share in other services and events including Light a Life, Harvest, Healing Service and much more.

**Open-Door** is a regular coffee morning held weekly on a Friday providing conversation and fellowship for anyone from the community and congregation or visitors to the church. It takes place alternately in the Church and in the nearby Castle Hotel (who also host our Friendship tea). It often involves doing little jobs like making prayer shapes, folding pew leaflets or filling shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse.

**Friendship Tea** - Every other month we hold a friendship tea in one of our local pubs. This is an opportunity for the recently bereaved and people living alone to come together, have a cup of tea (or two) and cake or scones and enjoy some company. We have discussions on a variety of topics and remember those we have lost. Generally, we have between eight and fifteen people attending. Each year, after our "Light a life" service, where we remember loved ones who have died, we invite those who have been bereaved to the next friendship tea and over the years a good number have responded to the invitation and continue to come.

## **Children's Work**

### **The Children's Church Team**



#### **Dr Ian Kelham – Safeguarding Officer**

The doctor in the Vale for many years, Ian, now nominally retired, has a good knowledge of the community and is known and respected in the area.



#### **Reverend Ann Gibbs Assistant Safeguarding Officer**

Reverend Ann is also a Saturday Club Leader, Jam Club Leader, part of the Church/ School Worship Team, the Church/school group and a school governor with a strong and supportive relationship with the school.

#### **Ann Spence - Children's Work Organiser**

Ann organises the junior youth club -Saturday Club, is a member of the Church/School Worship Team and the School/ Church group. She is one of 3 or 4 leaders of the after-school club – JAM, is involved in Open The Book and is part of the Safeguarding team.





**Easter Egg Hunt**

**Ann** organises various Children’s events -including A Dark Skies Event as part of the Dark Skies Reserve festival which falls in October half term- this is an alternative to a Light and Dark party.

She also co-ordinates children’s involvement in the fete, flower festival, Carnival and Christmas & Easter preparation.

We have recently expanded the space available to children at the back of the church and erected an outside storage shed for children’s equipment. Parents and children use the space in church to meet informally while the children play. These changes have been a huge help with running Saturday Club which usually takes place in the church building. We have maintained our contacts with the school throughout the pandemic offering support in whatever way we can, and have managed to adapt Harvest, Christingle and Christmas services and activities.

There are six more amazing volunteers involved in our Children’s activities.

Children contribute to church decoration and display with their own window and also begin the village Late Night Shopping with a performance of Carols in the church. This is usually filled to capacity. We often run a *Churches Together* entry in the Carnival involving any children not included in entries from other organisations, who wish to take part. **Daphne Midwood** is one of our volunteers and organises our Flower Festival and a big Christmas performance which usually includes involving lots of local children. The Flower Festival is our major fundraiser



**The Mothers Union** - We have a loyal and enthusiastic branch of the Mothers’ Union in our parish led by **Marilynn Russell**. At present we have 22 members who are also active parishioners. Prayer and service are at the centre of all we do but we very much enjoy the friendships we have made both in our work and in our meetings and services which are very well attended. The MU is at the heart of the parish. Its members support the Food Bank, the school, and the Saturday Club. We have a Me & U Prayer Group led by a

member and open to all in the parish. The MU is a world-wide organisation which enriches the lives of our members here in the UK and the many branches all over the world. It connects our little village with the wider world and broadens our faith and experience. We hope that our new Rector will support and maybe join us as we try to show the love of Christ in all we do.

## **Our Finance**

Our Assistant Treasurers are



**Marian Fosker**



**Peter Fosker**

**& Bill Ball** (Bill is also our Gift Aid Officer)

Since 2012, when the Parish had insufficient funds to pay our parish share we have, with some help from the Diocese, and through intense economies, been able to gradually build up our reserves. In recent years annual receipts and expenditure have each been in the region of £45,000-£50,000, usually resulting in a small surplus. However, in 2019 there was a deficit of £1,800.

The 2019 year end unrestricted reserves were £41,600. With the impact of Covid-19 our reserves could be reduced to £30,000 by 2020 year end. Reducing congregation numbers and rising costs are having a significant impact. There is no regular congregation at either Stoke Pero or St. Nicholas, whose costs also have to be covered. Our Parish Share of £28,582 (2021) consumes almost all of St. Dubricius congregation's giving.

Other fundraising sources include visitor donations, and annual events including a Fete, Flower Festival and Gift Day. Across the parish we average annually 10 funerals and 2 weddings and we pay a part-time office administrator and an organist. In addition, the congregation raise funds for several charities which was over £2,000 for 2019.

It is estimated that the overdue re-shingling of St. Dubricius spire could cost £90,000, which we hope to partly fund from grants.

***For the latest full financial report please contact Rachel Kingdon by email: [stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk)***

## **Our Buildings**

The principal place of worship is the **Parish Church of St. Dubricius**, a beautiful Grade I listed building. The dedication is to Dubricius, also known in Welsh as Dyfrig, a 6th -century Briton ecclesiastic venerated as a saint. He was born in the Kingdom of Erddig, now part of Wales, and became a highly influential scholar in the areas

around Herefordshire, Brecon, and Glamorgan He later became Bishop of Llandaff. And may have founded an earlier church on this site. The church stands on the site of an earlier church which may date from around 1120. The current church dates from the 13th century and has been designated by English Heritage as a grade I listed building.

**St. Nicholas, Porlock Weir**, is a 'tin tabernacle' occupying a raised position above the village with a fine view of Porlock Bay and Hurlestone Point. Built circa 1880 and is a good example of only a few tin mission chapels in the country.

**Stoke Pero church** has no known dedication to any saint. It is Grade II listed and at 309m above sea level it is the highest church on Exmoor. It has been claimed to be at a higher altitude than any other church in England. The list of Rectors goes back to 1242.

We do not have a church hall but have an office in the new wing (the Oakwing ) of St. Dubricius' Church of England VA First School building which has a gate from the churchyard which provides easy access between the two buildings. With agreement, we are able to use the school buildings for events such as Harvest Lunch and an Auction of Talents.

### **Our Challenges**

- *Building on our presence in the village*
- *Maintaining our excellent relationship with the school through changes of Rector and Headteacher.*
- *Building on our Ecumenical work through Churches Together in Porlock.*
- *Uniting our benefice*
- *Growing our congregation and attracting families and younger people.*
- *Major Repairs needed to Spire and Clock at St. Dubricius.*
- *Substantial repairs needed at St. Nicholas, Porlock Weir.*
- *Getting a lease for the Oak Wing Office agreed.*
- *Making the Church building warm, comfortable and accessible for all.*

### **To Our New Rector**

***Whoever God chooses to lead and guide us in our ministry at St. Dubricius' will be guaranteed a warm welcome, support and friendship.***

## Selworthy Parish Profile

### All Saints Church and Lynch & Tivington Chapels

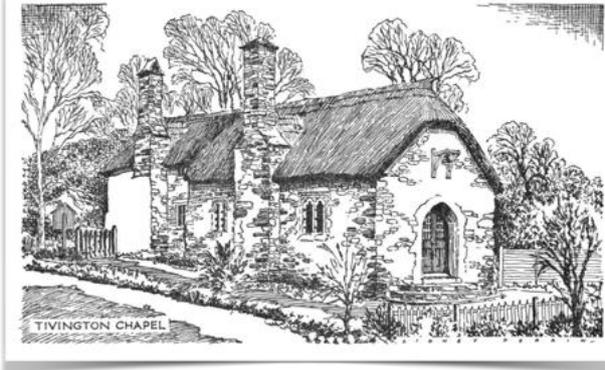


#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH

We really do offer a warm welcome to the new incumbent, and are keen to play our part in the new beginning for the Benefice. All Saints church, The Cathedral of the Moor, stands looking out over a landscape of heather moorland, deep wooded coombes and scattered farms, full of people who we want to welcome into the church. The average age is high but there are young families enjoying the benefits of rural life and excellent local schools. There is an active agricultural and field sports community, deeply-rooted into the landscape, and which traditionally had strong links with All Saints.

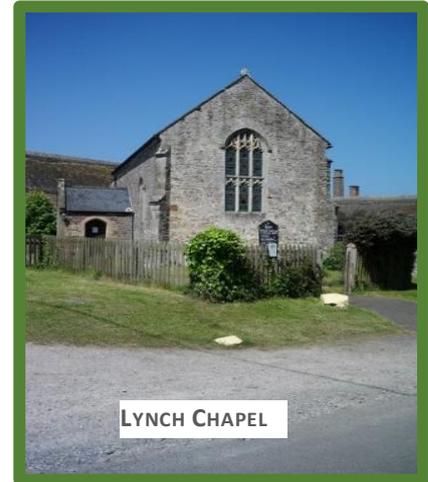


All Saints welcomes visitors from all over the world, who not only revisit us year by year, but stay in touch through our website :



([www.selwothychurch.com](http://www.selwothychurch.com)). Their donations and car park fees are two of our main sources of income, the third being the annual Flower Festival. We support The Vidiyal Trust in

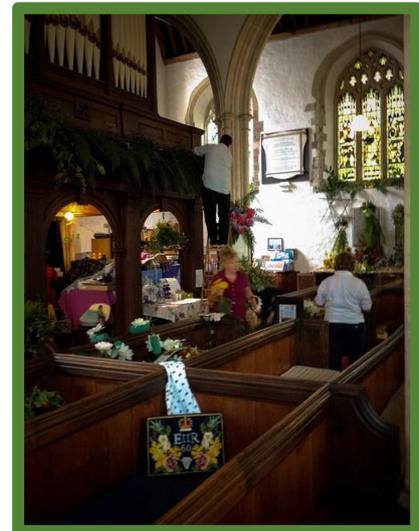
India ([www.vidiyaltrust.com](http://www.vidiyaltrust.com)), created by a member of our church over 30 years ago to care for and educate Dalit children and now extended to all age groups.



Although we are few at the moment, our congregation is outward-looking. The Book of Common Prayer is fundamental to All Saints, but we recognise the need to add services that are more accessible to a greater number of people. Retaining and respecting this duality, a combination of erudite theology and accessibility is, perhaps, the key opportunity we offer to the new Rector.

### **OUR HOPES FOR OUR PARISH**

These are many and varied - to grow our congregation; to return to financial viability; to fill the church with music again, with concerts and recitals; to construct a small kitchen, servery and lavatory within the church so we may become more sociable, offering tea and coffee after services, more easily during our Flower Festival and musical events – with those facilities we could become a social hub for the village and its environs; essentially, to become again a thriving, worshipping, welcoming and varied community serving this beautiful area through the good times and the bad. In recent years, under the previous incumbent, we have experienced difficulties with keeping our parishes united and are eager for a new and dynamic Rector to work with us to recreate a warm and constructive Benefice.



### **CHURCH BUILDING**

All Saints church is a 15th century Grade 1 English Heritage building. Despite the church being constructed in the 15th century, the plain tower was completed in the 14th century, in the Early Perpendicular style. The stained glass is predominantly Victorian, with a few considerably earlier fragments; the leather Reredos screen was made by the Porlock tannery; we have a ring of six bells and an excellent organ.

Visiting musicians always comment on the generous acoustics – with modern facilities we could host many concerts and recitals. There is heating and we generate electricity from solar panels on the roof.

## **SERVICES**

Services are taken by our Associate Priest, the Revd Stephen Humphreys, apart from the 2nd Sunday when the service is taken by the Revd Ann Gibbs. We look to and rely on both for warmth, experience and wisdom, and it will be essential that the new Rector can work happily with Stephen and Ann.

## **FINANCE**

We are attempting to pay off the arrears of 2020 Parish Share but until the effects of COVID are removed, we are extremely unlikely to pay any of our Parish Share for 2021.

Selworthy consists of a few houses and cottages, a tea room and the church, so the bulk of All Saints' revenue comes from visitor donations, car parking fees and the annual Flower Festival – income from the congregation is a very small proportion of what is required to keep the church open.

***For the latest full financial report please contact Rachel Kingdon by email: [stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk)***

## **MUSIC AT SELWORTHY**

We have a very good organist and a good organ, which is cared for by Harrison and Harrison, but no choir. The congregation have found themselves taking on this role as the repertoire of music has grown. We use The New English Hymnal, over the year finding that we manage to sing most of the hymns including the 'Lent Prose'; Sunday Communion we sing the ordinary to the setting by Merbecke and on two Sundays of the month we have Matins where we sing the responses and the canticles.

Very occasionally we have enjoyed a visiting choir, In Ecclesia, who are as keen to return as we are to welcome them, and a local school choir who performed Schubert's Deutsche Messe. We would very much like to do more of this. The building really lends itself to concerts. These have ranged from a wonderful (if slightly chaotic) musical play from one of the Taunton schools to the intense concentration of a professional string quartet playing Hayden's Seven Last Words. Our annual Flower Festival, on the weekend of the August Bank Holiday, usually has a well-received concert. We have a list of people who enjoy music at Selworthy so we can be sure of a good audience.

The building committee is very keen that as soon as possible our refreshment, access, and lavatory facilities will be upgraded; for some years now it has been our intention to run a programme of summer concerts making use of the spectacular setting of Selworthy with its backdrop looking towards Exmoor and Dunkery.

In addition to All Saint's Church our chapel-of-ease at Lynch has a small one-manual pipe organ which is used twice a month for Evensong. There we sing hymns and the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. Lynch Chapel could be an exquisite venue for miniature recitals.

## **OUR NEW RECTOR AND WHAT WE CAN OFFER**

The team at All Saints is ready and willing to work with a new Rector who is warm, flexible in social and theological thinking, and approachable. We have a strong PCC, many of whom have worshipped at All Saints for decades and are keen to offer their experience and understanding of Selworthy and surrounding area. At the moment, the church is a tourist attraction – visitors come and look, have tea at the café nearby, go for a walk and leave. We could be so much more – this is the challenge we offer and the energy we can share, to work with the Rector to bring new life and music to the church, to build a congregation and a community.

## **CONSULTATION**

Selworthy and Luccombe and Porlock parishes were engaged in a gathering last year to pool our hopes and aspirations for the future. We wanted to see where we had ideas in common and whether any parishes could discern their particular charism. Subsequently a questionnaire was distributed around the parish. The answers pointed to the importance of the church in the area even when attendance was poor. A new incumbent might interpret that as an opportunity for the Gospel.

## **COVID RESPONSE**

Since March 2020, along with much of the country, we have 'gone to ground', emerging when we felt confident. At the same time there has been a great deal of keeping in touch—perhaps more than usual. It has been a time when people's minds have been focussed on what we had and what we miss. We have kept the rules very carefully as most of the congregation are of an age which demands especial care; but when Services are allowed we have met for worship in All Saints' church.

## **Luccombe Parish Profile**

### **St. Mary the Virgin Church**

#### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH**

This is a beautiful rural Parish which lies within the Exmoor National Park and is mostly owned by the National Trust. We also have some privately owned houses and Housing Association rented properties. It includes agricultural land, woods and moorland. There is only one Church in this Parish and it is situated in the centre of the small village of Luccombe. The village comprises of approximately 40 households and 2 farms. Just over a mile away, also in the Parish, are the hamlets of Horner and West Luccombe with another 14 houses, 2 tea gardens, a farm in each and a caravan/camping business. A proportion of residents are of retirement age, a significant number are self-employed and those that are employed mainly work outside of the Parish.

The Ecclesiastical Parish is significantly smaller than the Civil Parish, the hill farms being in the Civil parish of Luccombe but in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Porlock.

#### **CHURCH BUILDING**

Grade I listed, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the building is well maintained, the next quinquennial survey was due in 2020 but has been postponed to 2021. It has seating for around 130 people with under pew heating and freestanding heaters all electric, neither very efficient nor economic. It has beautiful stained-glass windows and a tower with 6 bells. It also has a churchyard and upper churchyard.

#### **THE ORGAN AND MUSIC**

The organ, maintained by Harrison and Harrison, is the one on which Peter Hurford, the renowned composer, organist and founder of the International Organ festival, practised his playing. This led to over 50 years of close connection with the Cathedral and Abbey of St Albans with annual choir camps and, now these have come to an end, we have visits from members of the Ex-Choristers Association who occasionally sing for us.

#### **CONGREGATION**

Over the past couple of years, the congregation numbers have dwindled as people have died or moved out of the area. Services such as the annual Carols by candle-light service have regularly seen the Church overflowing with extra seating and people standing in the bell tower. Christmas Midnight Mass (held at 2130 on Christmas Eve), Easter, Harvest Festival and Remembrance (shared with Selworthy and held in each church in alternate years) all attract more than the usual attendees. Preparation for these services are also well supported by the villagers and other persons.

Luccombe's core congregation is about 8 in total most of whom reside outside of the Parish, although 2 used to live in the village. Some people attend intermittently.

## **STATISTICS**

The average weekly attendance for 2019 excluding the wedding, baptism, Easter, Harvest Festival, combined Remembrance Service and Christmas is 7

## **FINANCE**

We have not paid our Parish Share in full for 3 years, and we are unlikely to be able to do so in the near future. Raising Money is a necessity and the PCC recognise this. In normal years we hold various fundraising activities but it is difficult to keep up with ever increasing costs and has been impossible in 2020. We have raised large amounts of money for repairs to the bells and for repairs to the tower. Redecoration together with renovations, were carried out within the last 3-5 years. ***For the latest full financial report please contact Rachel Kingdon by email: [stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stdubriciuschurch@yahoo.co.uk)***

## **OUR NEW RECTOR**

We can offer the support of SSM Revd. Stephen Humphreys who leads most of our services and we hope will be able to continue to do so, for as long as he is willing and able. We also enjoy good support from the non-worshipping community for help with fundraising activities. We have a willing community, who do not regularly worship, but willingly give support for Church fundraising. The community is very neighbourly helping when help is needed, with volunteers producing and freely giving food for villagers' funerals, teas for visiting choirs and fundraising events, also flowers for the Church.

We hope our new Rector will be someone who is approachable, understanding, generous in spirit, enthusiastic and who is prepared to embrace the whole spectrum of the Church of England. We are also hoping for someone who is flexible with services and is happy to minister to a small congregation.

Just as importantly we want our new Rector to bring cohesion to the Benefice and to be happy to work with the Revd Stephen Humphreys, acknowledging what he means to the congregation of Luccombe.

## **Our Church Officers**

Left to Right

Ros Clements (Treasurer)  
Ann Churchill (PCC)  
Rosemarie Gande (Churchwarden)  
Margaret Melville (PCC)



## **The Deanery**

Our vision:

‘start where people are and discover together where God would have us be’.

- We support the Food Cupboard & the Exmoor Youth Project.
- The benefice Mission Action Plan is part of the deanery MAP with a widely publicised A4 leaflet. • The Ministry for Mission leaflet is available from the Diocesan website.
- Chapter is warmly welcoming, we enjoy time together in different parts of the deanery and have continued to meet by zoom and in person over the course of this year and during lockdown.,
- Normally, we meet monthly for a Eucharist and business with some social occasions.
- We are mutually supportive, encourage one another and seek to build up discipleship in the deanery.

Rev. Caroline Ralph – Rural Dean

## **Our Diocesan Vision**

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

The vision speaks of the story of Jesus; his life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection; the story which is the context of our faith and the content of our message.

We seek to live this story as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world and to tell it, both in sharing the good news and by the way in which our lives speak about Him.

The diocesan strategy is built around three priorities:

1. To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do.
2. To re-align our resources towards mission.
3. To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

The priorities provide a framework for decision-making and planning at parish, benefice, deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.

As a diocese in the months ahead we will be having to ask many questions and seeking God’s way as to how we can support one another in living this out in the light of the ongoing impact of coronavirus. We will seek to appoint clergy who are able to take forward what has been learned during this time, are flexible in their approach and able to help develop the gifts of people in the parishes in the spirit of Setting God’s People Free.

## Appendices:

# **Consultation on the Role of The Church and of Our New Rector**

As we began the process of working out what we and the whole benefice [of Porlock, Selworthy and Luccombe] wanted the future of our churches to be, and what we needed in a Rector to achieve that, our first move was to consult with the community, the school and the congregation. In Porlock, we used the documents below.

We received a lot of responses (40+, and the children's) and they have been vital in informing the profile that we use to advertise for and recruit our new incumbent. More than that though, they will be invaluable in planning our future development and relationship with our community.

We have summarised the responses in sections and hope we have included everyone's views. When several people said very similar things, we used one person's words to represent all.

## **Congregation Responses to the Consultation**

### **How and in what direction would you like to see our Church and Benefice Community grow and develop?**

- Be outward looking, preach the gospel, bring the Christian Ethos into the community.
- The whole congregation should work to be at the heart of the village both personally and collectively – a visible presence.
- Work together as a Benefice united in our Christian mission of proclaiming and showing God's love.
- Maintain diversity of worship and keep up our choral heritage.
- Look after our lovely churches and make them warm and welcoming places for all.
- Reach out to a younger congregation with modern, lively and accessible services and music.
- Make our church accessible to all in its worship and its fellowship. Seek ways to promote equality and tolerance. A church for everyone.
- Provide material support for those in need.
- Maintain and strengthen links with the school and through this our relationship with the younger element in the village.
- Continue to encourage and support children in their faith.

- Build on the wonderful Celebrate Services – What joy they bring us!

**What qualities or skills could a new Rector bring to this task?**

- First and foremost a believer. Expressing a sincere faith in all we express in our creed. Well versed in theology and dedicated to widening and deepening our faith.
- Prayerful, compassionate and kind.
- A good communicator, outgoing and resourceful. Intellectual and interested in history.
- Encouraging, supportive and appreciative of their team whether paid or volunteers, clergy or lay people.
- A good listener, someone to confide in and discuss serious matters with.
- Able to reach out to young and old alike, to work with families and the school, the elderly, sick and bereaved.
- To be happy, positive and friendly and take part in community life - a real part of a rural community.
- To embrace the diversity of worship we enjoy.
- Someone who is enthusiastic about working ecumenically and continuing our “Churches Together In Porlock” group.
- Good at organisation, administration and finance. Up to date with new ideas and initiatives.
- One response felt that the Rector should be a man. This respondent mentioned a family man and another, that the support of a spouse would be helpful.
- Three respondents expressed a preference for a female Rector

**What does your church mean to you – what brings you here to worship?**

- I hope it is my faith and my beliefs.
- The fellowship of worshipping together is very special.
- A place where one can find comfort in times of trouble and rejoice when good things happen.
- Space for prayer. Calm and friendly. Always someone to help.
- It is part of my life.
- Joyful worship, Holy Communion, mix of old and new hymns, I particularly like the prayer book Eucharist, the format and words, preferably with little extras added.
- My Church is my Family. I have never known life without church.

- Fellowship, loving friendship, sanctuary, peace, the sacraments, enjoyment, music.
- Church should be a meeting point for all who carry out God's work in their daily lives.
- Without it I might forget to worship!

### **Some New Ideas from Comments**

- A regular Café at the rear of Church (we do have a regular coffee morning)
- Start a children and Families Drama Group – Acts
- Run “Get to know Church\* sessions for non-churchgoers who may want to attend but are a bit nervous of it.

### **Community Responses to the Consultation**

#### **What do you think the Church's role in the parishes and communities should be?**

- A centre for Christians to meet and interact, celebrating key events in the Christian calendar and to honour the fallen.
- Should feel part of the community and not exclusive to regular churchgoers.
- Central to spiritual growth.
- There to see us through life events and show us what is really important in life.
- To continue the spread of the bidding of Jesus Christ.
- A welcoming sanctuary for prayer, contemplation and peace of mind. To offer spiritual support in 'Rites of Passage' in local lives and other times of need.
- Be a significant port of call for people in need, temporal or spiritual.
- Teach and preach the Bible. Show the community what it is to be disciples of Jesus.
- To be open at all times, especially now when people are most likely to need sanctuary and inspiration.
- To show the meaning of the cross everywhere.
- To be built around the Anglican communion.
- A central point of community and activity, so local people feel comfortable coming into the church. The food cupboard is an excellent example of this.
- The very hub of the community and parishes – in the good and the bad times.
- To care for the people, as we are all God's people and therefore equal.
- A place of sanctuary and love, to everyone.
- To seek ways to bring the Christian ethos into sometimes intolerant individuals in the community.
- Develop gender equality and BAME awareness.

### **What qualities and skills would you like our new Rector to bring to the role?**

- Communicate and relate to people of all ages and those who live on their own, both churchgoers and others, strengthening community bonds.
- Humorous, open and approachable, to be available to and be seen across the community.
- Welcoming and not judgemental. Encouraging and supportive.
- Someone who has had life experiences and understands what life is like for other people.
- Needs to be involved in village life outside the church, perhaps a pub visitor.
- A good listener with innovative ideas.
- Genuine, someone who will not get rid of any traditions that remain and who might return to the use of books.
- Warm, empathetic and community minded with ecumenical leaning, low-key missionary awareness in outreach.
- Good with young and the elderly.
- Evangelical in belief and teaching of the Bible.
- Able to handle both traditional and modern.
- Maintain the link with the school.
- Accept all folk regardless of race, colour, creed or sexuality.
- Good interpersonal skills.
- Able to strengthen the church's PR in the village.
- Should have emotional intelligence and insight.

### **What does the Church mean to you?**

- Part of the core of our village – a flexible support mechanism in good times and bad.
- The Church is a focal point in the village for the whole community not just regular churchgoers. It provides stability and is a symbol of hope and tradition.
- A community without a church would be a sad place to live.
- A place of peace and tranquillity, welcoming to everybody – a place of comfort.
- A place of history with a sense of permanence and reliability.
- Somewhere that brings us together in times of national tragedy or celebration.
- An important part of everyday life.
- To lead and be shining examples of Jesus in the community.
- Not ashamed to stick to and believe the teaching of the Bible, even when culture goes the opposite way.
- A proper, traditional church service is everything that's good in life.
- The church should be leading our country in this awful time, not busying in being p.c.
- An essential cornerstone of my life.
- I'm not a regular churchgoer but value its role in village life.
- It's the spiritual hub of the village. A comfort to me during the year, especially when there are national memorials.

- The church and school are physically and 'ethos'-wise the centre of our community. It is a traditional, reliable and safe place.

### **School Staff Views**

#### **What do you think the church's role in the School should be?**

- To support staff to deliver Christian values and knowledge.
- To continue to provide a regular presence in the school.
- Be supportive and work with leadership to enhance the provision of RE and Worship.
- To visit the school to speak to and teach children in circle times and group work and to work together to arrange celebrations.
- Encourage the school to take part in community events
- Be part of the school family and provide support for those in need
- To encourage contributions by other denominations
- Make the Bible accessible and interesting in meaningful ways for the children

#### **What qualities and skills would you like our new rector to bring to the role?**

- Kind, approachable, happy. Listens and talks to children appropriately.
- Caring, supportive, has time for people & children.
- Really cares about their role, their beliefs and people.
- Patient and non-judgemental.
- Should be able to unite the village, an excellent "people person" and communicator.
- A clear thinker.
- Be willing to try new things to encourage children to understand Christian Faith

#### **What does being a church school mean to you?**

- A church school creates a kind and caring ethos where everyone cares about each other.
- Being part of a community, sharing faith with each other, embracing the values of the church.
- The visible presence of "church people". Being welcomed in the wider church community and building.
- The school has a close partnership with the parish.
- The school community values everyone equally whether they have a faith or not.
- It is obvious that children are nurtured by Christian Values.
- The school shines out in the community.
- To provide morals and religion under the supervision of the church
- A nurturing value led environment which educates a child for life in an ever-changing world.
- Being part of a well-intended team.

## What did the children say?

We would like our Rector to be : Kind ,Happy, Nice, Helpful, Thoughtful and Wise, Good Mannered and Clever.

Believe in God  
Honest, Friendly &  
Kind

They need to be able to Listen to us – talk to us – come into our classroom – help us learn – spend time with children.

Make up good prayers

Good at storytelling

Confident &  
Brave

To : Have a sense of humour, Be compassionate and wise Help God & Have a dog

From all the children in Adventure, Discovery and Explorer Classes.