

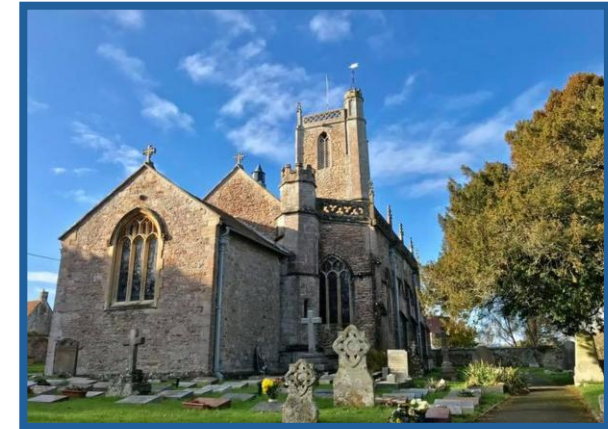
BENEFICE PROFILE



**St James the Great
Winscombe**



**All Saints
Sandford**



**St John the Baptist
Churchill**

Putting the love of Christ in the heart of our communities

<https://winsandchurches.org.uk>



A Benefice on the edge of the Mendip Hills

We are two parishes with three churches in the beautiful North Somerset countryside.

We are young in our history as a three church Benefice. The parishes of Winscombe and Sandford were joined in 2006, and Churchill joined the Benefice in July 2023.

Each church values its unique identity and has historically had strong connections with its local community. We have active links with 5 local schools, 4 care and residential homes and with the other churches in the area. Each of our villages is expanding with new housing developments over the past few years, and these are continuing to be built.

We are fortunate to have a Church Centre in Winscombe which provides us with a place where we can all meet together.

Our shared vision is to 'put the love of Christ in the heart of our communities.'

Our Churchwardens and our Ministry Leadership Team meet regularly, and the churches are working together to keep the Benefice moving forward, as appropriate, during the vacancy.

However, there is a real need to grow further in faith together and find our way as a new Benefice.

reaching
welcoming
caring
serving
Teaching



Putting the love of Christ in the heart of our community.

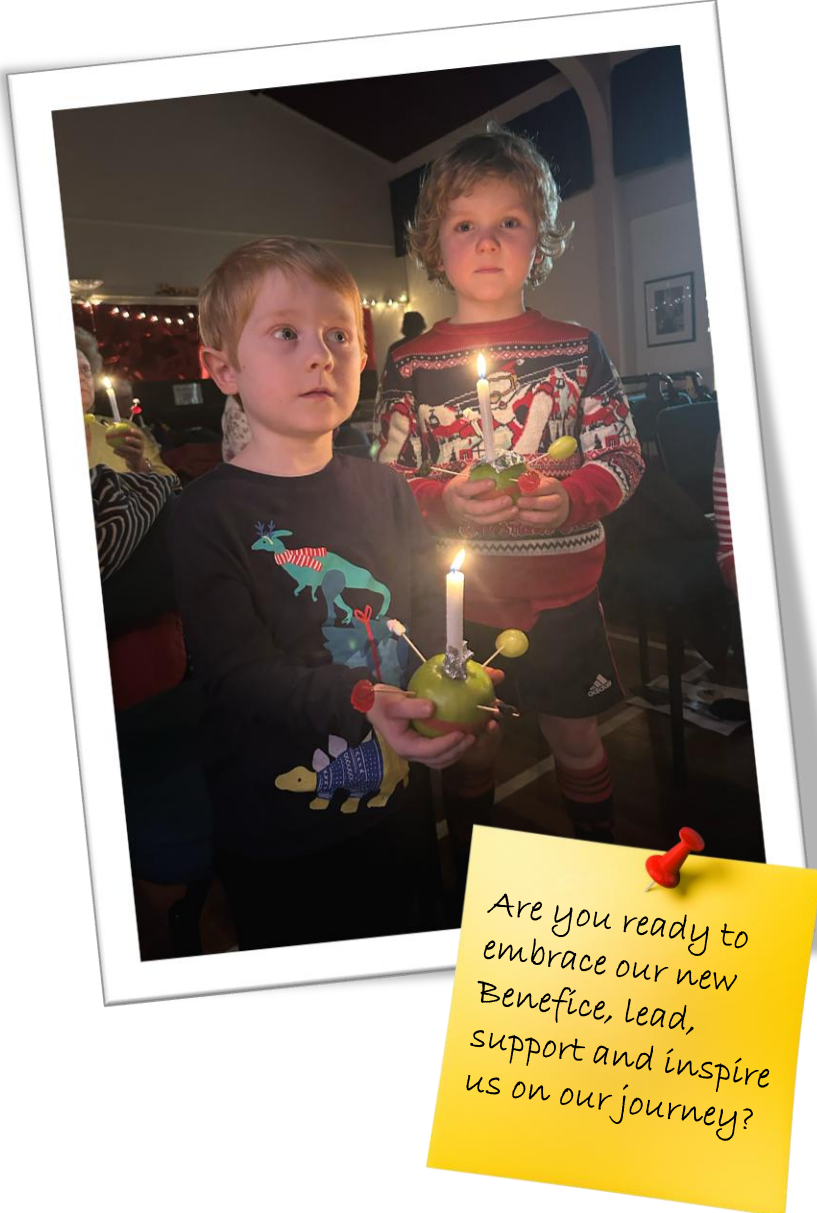


Our Benefice is in a beautiful location in North Somerset. It benefits from excellent road and rail links to local towns, cities, the rest of the country and South Wales. Bristol International Airport is just 9 miles away.

Our Story



Our Aspirations



Collaborative ministry

To 'be' the Church by inspiring, encouraging and enabling more people to take up leadership roles in worship and pastoral care and other voluntary roles. We have started to 'grow' more lay worship assistants and want everyone to be able to use their own gifts to serve and grow in love and faith.

Three churches working together

For all our churches to work together to become a Benefice that is united in its common vision. We strive to recognise and celebrate the individual strengths and desires of each church whilst balancing their needs equally.

Balancing stability with growth

To develop a thriving ministry with families, children and young people. To grow and strengthen our links with all our schools and realise the potential that new housing in our villages brings. We also recognise the importance of continuing to serve our existing worshipping community.

A broader approach to worship

To create a varied pattern of services that enables people of all ages to worship God. To have opportunities to engage with our clergy through worship and shared time together.

Developing our church buildings

To continue to maintain and develop our buildings whilst exploring how they can be more fully utilised to support the local community and support our vision. We also want to go beyond our church buildings to engage with daily life in our villages.

Our Challenges



Looking Forward Together

In 2024 we held a Vision Day following a detailed consultation with our church and local communities. More recently we met together as a church family for a time of prayer and discernment about the future of our Benefice. These events connected with over 100 people. These are the challenges we identified together. We know we have the potential, waiting to be ignited, to meet these challenges and more!

Broadening our demographic

The population of our three villages is nearly 7,000. According to the 2021 Census of North Somerset, 18% are 15 or under and 24% are over 65. We need to find a way to reach and encourage those that fall between these two sections of the population.

Community connection

We have several new housing developments in each of our villages and want to engage with new residents who are typically younger with families. Our challenge is to get out into the community to bring them into the life of the church by being more invitational, structuring worship and events to fit in with their lives.

Communication

Although we already have a Benefice Magazine, an informative website, active WhatsApp group and Facebook pages, we are aware that we need to find further practical and effective ways to improve communication within and between our churches and across the wider community.

Styles of Worship

Ensuring that our worship deepens our faith, is diverse in style and is accessible for all ages.

Finances

Working with our Finance Group, we need to consider how to provide a more secure financial future across all the churches.



What we offer



Our Collaborative Team

We believe that Christ's ministry is shared by all Christian people. Our enthusiastic, collaborative ministry team is looking forward to working with you.



In addition we offer:

- ❖ a warm welcome to our friendly villages each of which have a great community spirit
- ❖ new residents receive welcome packs and regular updates via social media
- ❖ a shared commitment to meet the challenges we have identified
- ❖ 9 hours of paid Benefice administrative support based at the office in the Church Centre
- ❖ a number of teams and groups who look after different aspects of church life
- ❖ thriving social activities where we meet together and welcome people from across the local area
- ❖ well established links with primary and secondary schools, care and residential homes and other churches
- ❖ support for the ongoing development of your ministry whilst giving you time for family life and recreation
- ❖ a recently built modern Vicarage

Above all we offer you our fellowship, friendship, prayers and support.

There are many qualities we would like to see in our new Vicar, but we are praying for someone who feels that the Holy Spirit is truly calling them to lead our Benefice.

- ❖ have a heart for growing the love of Jesus Christ in this special part of the world

- ❖ be an enabler who will encourage all of us in our faith and service at home, at work, in our leisure time and in church

- ❖ be a good listener, communicator and facilitator

- ❖ be confident, friendly, visible and approachable; eager to play an active part in the life of our villages

We want our vicar to be the one who will support us, enjoy us, love, teach and guide us!



Our Activities and Outreach



Our activities are many and varied from regular groups that support our worship, mission and outreach to teams that carry out specific tasks.

We support charities both at home and abroad. As well as regular donations to our local foodbanks, we have recently supported Weston Hospicecare and the MND Association as well as offering care and shelter to Ukrainian refugees and providing the funds to buy tables and chairs for a school in India. We also play an active part in our local Children's Society and Christian Aid groups and respond to crisis appeals. Thousands of pounds have been raised.

Many of our members thrive on being busy and involved, using their time, skills and talents to contribute to the life of our churches.

Are you ready to bring your own gifts to join with our church community?



St James the Great, Winscombe



Our building

St James the Great is a beautiful Grade I listed building consecrated in 1236 with many distinctive features. The 'Friends of St James' have helped to maintain and improve the fabric of the church over many years. The small, separate Churchyard Room is currently let to a local artist. The location of the church is a challenge as it is some distance above the main village. However, the church is an important focal point for major festivals and family life events.

Who worships with us

The majority of our congregation are retired people who value the tradition of worship at St James's with the organ and choir. Average attendance for Sunday Services is 28. Special services and festivals are well supported by the village community. The church is open daily for visits and private prayer. Members belong to several Home Groups for prayer, bible study and fellowship.

What is distinctive about us

As a Christian community we place great importance on supporting and working with people in our community. Much of this work is based in our Church Centre in the village itself. Many church members are also actively involved in village activities. We are a major supporter of a local Foodbank.

Our priority for the future

We want to preserve our special building and ensure that it is fit for purpose to serve the local community in the future.



All Saints, Sandford



Our building

All Saints was built as a chapel of ease for the parish church of St James the Great in Winscombe and consecrated in 1884. It became a Grade II listed building in 1983. It is well positioned within the village. The removal of the pews has created a versatile space for worship and other activities. A Church Room with a kitchen and toilet was added in the early 1980s.

Who worships with us

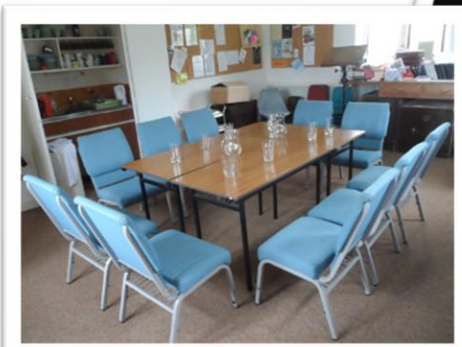
We have a loyal, mainly elderly worshipping community. Attendance on Sunday is between 14 and 20 people. Our weekly midweek communion, held in the Church Room is attended by 6 to 10 people. Services to celebrate festivals are usually packed showing how much they are valued by the local community.

What is distinctive about us

We are very proud of our monthly Community Café which serves delicious homemade soups and cakes with tea and coffee. The Café is always very well supported by the local community and people from further afield, all enjoying food and fellowship together. The Café raises considerable funds for our church.

Our priority for the future

We have recently raised almost £30k to refurbish the Church Room, kitchen and toilet. We want to look at ways of using our upgraded facilities to benefit the local community.





St John the Baptist, Churchill



Our building

St John the Baptist Church is a pretty, Grade I listed, Norman Church set on the edge of the village of Churchill dating back to 1180. There is also a Stable building nearby, converted in 1992, for the use of meetings and recently renovated to develop it for community activities. We are also responsible for a small community Reading Room in the centre of the village.

Who worships with us

St John's has a core group of very loyal attendees who make up the regular 15 or so worshippers who work together well. The church is also used for fundraising and social events when many more people from the local community attend. We have enjoyed hosting events with Churchill Primary School, Churchill Academy and concerts arranged by Churchill Music. We also have a well attended Home Group that meets weekly throughout the year.

What is distinctive about us

Although we are small in number each of us feels valued as having something to contribute. We are welcoming to others and host regular fundraising and fellowship events that bring people into our church, such as our Christmas Craft Fair, the Patronal Festival Summer Lunch and Harvest Lunch. As part of our outreach, we run a popular weekly community café at the Reading Room. St John's also has historical links with Churchill Methodists and St Mary's in Langford.

Our priority for the future

We would like to make ourselves more visible in our local community, particularly to new families arriving in our housing developments, and also to build on pastoral care offered to residents in our local almshouses at the Cottage Homes on Front Street.



Our Church Centre



Our Church Centre (St James's Church Hall) is in the centre of Winscombe; it was built in the mid-1960s. The Centre has a large hall with a seating capacity of 120, a well-equipped kitchen, toilets and a small back meeting room. It is also the location of the Benefice Office where our part-time administrator works, three mornings a week. There is ample parking on site.

The Centre is used twice a month for Benefice Church Services; with more contemporary worship and a talented music group, it is extremely popular.

The Church Centre runs a growing weekly coffee morning which many newer residents attend and there is a weekly church-run parent and toddler group, Scramblers. The St James's Events team hold many social and fundraising events in the hall. It is used by many local organisations and businesses for regular activities, by the monthly village market, for blood donor sessions and as a polling station. The Centre is also valued as a venue for private functions such as family and children's parties. Lettings contribute significantly to our income.



Fresh Foundations is the name of our project which was initiated to consider how we can either replace, renovate or extend the Centre, to improve and make it more attractive, and utilise it more fully to support our mission and outreach.



Our Villages



Three friendly villages that are great places in which to live and work.

Lots of local services, shops and amenities for all ages.

370 new houses bringing new potential to each of our villages.

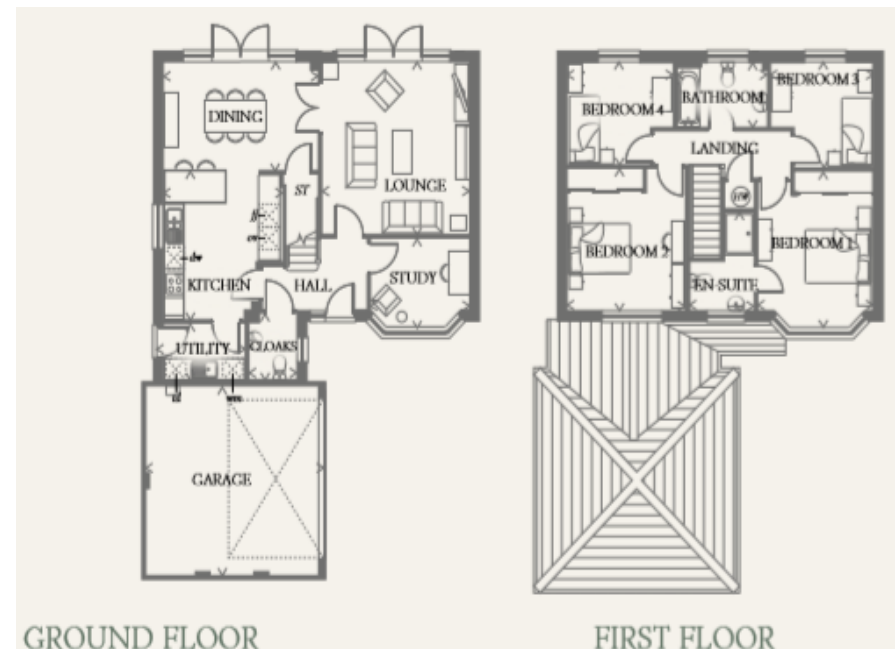
Great range of activities including sports, arts and the outdoors.

Good schools from pre-school age through to sixth form.

Within easy reach of Bristol, Bath, Wells and Weston-super-Mare.

Close to Bristol Airport and the M5 with good rail links from local stations.

The Vicarage



The Vicarage is a recently built property (completed in 2020) on the Woodborough Grange development in Winscombe.

It is close to all the village amenities and the Church Centre. It is a detached house in a cul-de-sac with four bedrooms, a study, a double garage with parking and a good size back garden.

Some Facts and Figures



Our current pattern of worship

	St James's Winscombe	All Saints Sandford	St John's Churchill
1 st Sunday	St James's or St John's 8.00am BCP Holy Communion Church Centre 10.00am Benefice Sunday Celebration (all age worship)		
2 nd Sunday	9.30am Parish Praise or Holy Communion	11.00am Parish Praise or Holy Communion	11.00am Parish Praise or Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday	Church Centre 10.00am Benefice Holy Communion		
4 th Sunday	9.30am Parish Praise or Holy Communion	11.00am Parish Praise or Holy Communion	11.00am Parish Praise or Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	11.00am Benefice Holy Communion alternating between the Churches and St Monica Trust		
Tuesdays weekly	10.00 am Midweek Holy Communion at All Saints		
Monthly	Holy Communion in each of our care and residential homes		



We know that our service plan needs to change to achieve a better balance and meet the needs and aspirations of all three churches.

Our Churches in 2024

	St James's Winscombe	All Saints Sandford	St John's Churchill
Electoral Roll	88	33	33
Baptisms	3	0	1
Weddings	2	0	2
Funerals	7	2	3
Burial of Ashes	10	3	1

Our Finances in 2024

	St James's Winscombe	All Saints Sandford	St John's Churchill
Total Income	£100,947	£13,881	£23,234
Total Expenditure	£102,223	£11,314	£27,221
Surplus (Deficit)	(£1,276)	£2,567	(£3,987)
Parish Share Ask	£65,301	£7,461	£11,865
Parish Share Paid (%)	£60,505 (93%)	£6,942 (93%)	£11,865 (100%)
Unrestricted Reserves	£73,191	£12,178	£5,300
Restricted Reserves	£43,568	£14,878	£14,400

Useful Links



The following websites can provide further information.

Benefice Website

<https://winsandchurches.org.uk>

Churches

History of our Churches

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>

Local Churches Together

Lynch Chapel URC / Baptist
Churchill Methodists
Sidcot Quakers
Cheddar Catholics

<https://cte.org.uk>

<https://www.lynchchapel.org.uk>

<https://www.churchillmethodistchurch.org.uk>

<https://sidcotquaker.org>

<https://ourladychurch.org>

Parish Councils

Winscombe and Sandford
Churchill

<https://www.winscombeandsandford-pc.gov.uk>

<https://churchillpc.org.uk>

Schools

Winscombe Primary
Sandford Primary
Churchill Academy and Sixth Form
Sidcot Junior and Senior

<https://winscombeprimaryschool.com>

<https://sandfordprimary.org>

<https://www.churchill-academy.org>

<https://www.sidcot.org.uk>

Sheltered Housing and Care Homes

Sewell House
Dunster Court
Winscombe Hall
St Monica Trust Sandford Station

<https://www.sewellhouse.co.uk>

<https://www.hanover.org.uk/find-a-home/property-search/dunster-court-winscombe>

<https://www.cedarscaregroup.co.uk/our-homes/winscombe-hall-care-centre-somerset>

<https://www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/retirement-villages/sandford-station>



Diocesan Statement – our vision for growth and transformation

Introduction



We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Vicar of the Benefice of Winscombe and Sandford with Churchill in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It

also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention. It is especially important for us today, as we seek to recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic which accelerated the pattern of decline in church attendance that we have seen across our diocese. Thankfully there are signs that we are recovering from the impact of the pandemic. Not only does national church data showed that our average adult weekly church attendance rose between 2021 and 2022 but, even more encouragingly, we have seen many churches around our diocese develop approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

In light of the challenges and opportunities we face, we feel our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Our shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.



Diocesan Statement – our vision for growth and transformation

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have	We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.
To develop new Christian worshipping communities	Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.
To share in ministry and leadership	We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.
To deepen and grow faith	This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth"(1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Diocesan Statement – our vision for growth and transformation

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?



Bishop Michael



Archdeacon of Bath

Deanery Statement



Thank you for taking the time to read this profile and praying about whether to apply to come to work with us in the Locking Deanery. This is an exciting time for both the Deanery and the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Although this is a time of many financial challenges, the Deanery is focused growth and change, with investment in Pioneer ministry, new housing, church revitalisation and placing mission and evangelism

at the heart of everything we do. The post for Winscombe and Sandford with Churchill would place you right in the heart of our Deanery.

The Locking Deanery is made up of 27 churches covering an area from the beaches of Weston-super-Mare to the slopes of the Mendip Hills – ‘a diverse family of churches sharing the love of God and embracing His Kingdom together’. We have an active Synod and DMPG leadership team, with a supportive Clergy chapter. Our Mission Action Plan prioritises Youth and Children, Students and Young Adults, Seniors and the Ageing population, and the Disadvantaged and Socially isolated under the banner of ‘Sharing Life and Inspiring Mission’. We have good Ecumenical links and value partnership working as we discern together what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do.

For more information, and to get a feel for the Deanery, please do visit <https://lockingdeanery.org>. We are praying that these next few years will be a really fruitful and rewarding time to minister in the Locking Deanery. If you would like to find out more or would value an informal chat about applying please do call me on 07951132629

With prayerful best wishes in Christ

Caroline

Rev'd Caroline Deakin – Area Dean of Locking