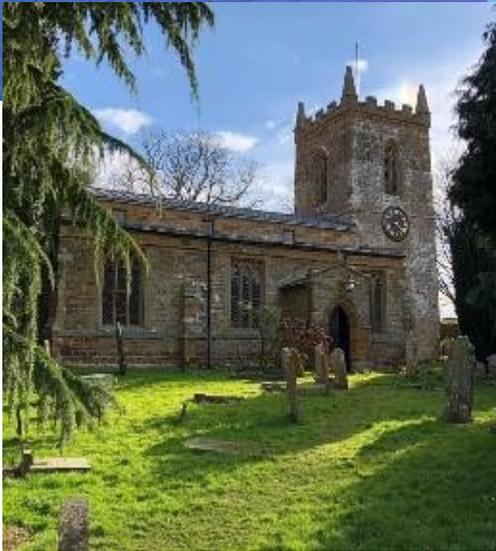


Parish Profile



Living Brook Benefice



Jesus said: 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water'
John 7.38

Living Brook is a benefice fed by the living water of God, growing in worship and prayer and in numbers. We want to share that joy-giving, living water with all our communities, that all may be transformed by the love of Jesus.

2021

Welcome

Living Brook benefice is a warm and varied benefice, which seeks to live up to its name: a place which is fed by the living water that God gives, and which offers that living water to others as our priority. We are looking forward to welcoming you into our team as associate priest with responsibility for the rural part of the benefice. You will be joining a creative and supportive team, with a strong lay presence.

The benefice includes three parishes. The smallest, Quinton and Preston Deanery, covers a swathe of countryside between Northampton and the Milton Keynes boundary, largely farmland, and with part of Salcey forest forming the southern end of the parish. Salcey Forest also forms part of Piddington with Horton parish, which includes the three villages of Piddington, Hackleton and Horton and a Church of England CEVA school that is an important part of the life and work of the community. These two parishes and the school will be at the heart of your ministry, offering traditional pastoral rural ministry and worship, while giving you the freedom to try new things.

The third parish is Hardingstone, a suburban area in Northampton currently working towards a major reordering project. Under the deanery plan, your appointment will give the incumbent of the Benefice the support they need to focus on leading Hardingstone as it develops, and as we plan for outreach to a large new planned estate, and to the large Brackmills trading estate. It will also enable the incumbent to take on the additional role of priest in charge of a neighbouring urban parish, Northampton St Mary the Virgin, which is currently in vacancy and in need of substantial ministerial investment.

Your role will be to lead the rural parishes while the incumbent leads the urban ones, within a combined team that shares resources, ideas, practical and moral support and — most importantly — prayer.

If you've read this far, thank you. Please keep reading and prayerfully consider whether this role is for you. This profile focuses on the parishes that you are being asked to lead, but if you want to know more about Hardingstone, Greater Northampton deanery, or anything else that is of interest to you, the archdeacon will be very happy to respond to your questions.

May God bless you!

Mrs Jackie Webb & Mr Steve Watson; Major Mike Crouch & Mr Andy Bailey

Churchwardens: Piddington with Horton; Quinton and Preston Deanery

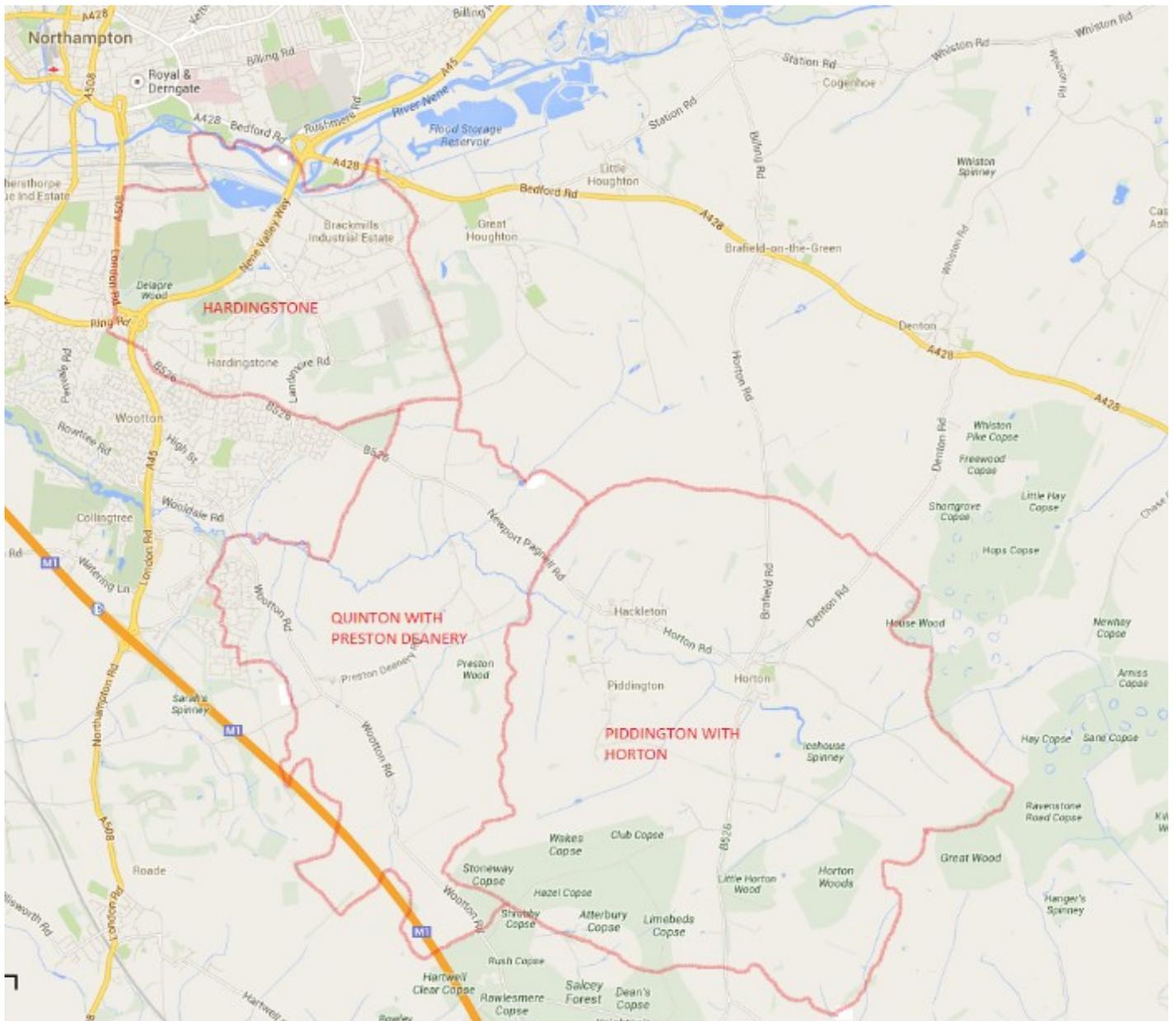
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The Parishes and Surrounding Area

Living Brook

South of Northampton and easily accessible to the M1, the A45 and the A428, the Living Brook is a rural and suburban part of an urban deanery. Hardingstone is the largest populated area and is due to grow significantly with new-build homes over the next five years. At present the parishes are in different administrative areas: Hardingstone is in Northampton Borough, while the other villages come under South Northamptonshire District. However, the new unitary authority will bring them together with the west of the county.



Character

Both Quinton and Preston Deanery, and Piddington with Horton parishes are rural, while being geographically close to a large urban area.

Quinton and Preston Deanery includes the small village of Quinton, and the hamlets of Quinton Green and Preston Deanery. The parish church is in Quinton, while a closed church in Preston Deanery is owned by the Churches Conservation Trust and is used very occasionally for worship. Some small businesses are run from former farm buildings, and a small children's nursery in Quinton Green complements the largely agricultural businesses in the area. Most farming is arable, and you'll see swathes of wheat, barley, oats and oilseed rape as the key crops.

About 200 people live in the parish, mostly in Quinton, which has a millennium-funded village hall used by the WI, a youth theatre group and regular games afternoons for elderly residents. There is some housing association provision in Quinton, alongside mixed private housing across the parish. The population are largely elderly or retired, although there is an increasing amount of younger families with children. Activities to bring the community together are highly valued, and the annual 'May Day' celebrations are a highlight of the parish year. The Green in the centre of Quinton is used alongside the village hall for community events.

Piddington with Horton parish includes the villages of Piddington (population 700), Hackleton (population 1000) and Horton (population 400). They are grouped together and have shared a vicar since the Tudor period. In the countryside around the villages are the woodland areas of Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase, extensive farmland (largely arable), an airstrip, and some small businesses based on farms. There is a residential army cadet training centre near Yardley Chase. The civic parish of Hackleton includes the three villages and Preston Deanery.

'New Hackleton' is a small northern extension of the village which is dominated by single floor housing for elderly residents. The villages are home to people of all ages and include some social housing alongside privately owned dwellings. A village hall in Hackleton serves the whole community, and features scouts and guides, short mat bowling club, WI, Group 8 drama club, a monthly film screening, a playgroup and hosts the church's Knit and Natter group. Social events in Horton are often held at the cricket club, which is now the only public community building in the village. Horton's Anglican church, St Mary Magdalene, was closed in the 1990's, and consultations are ongoing about selling the building, although the churchyard remains open.

There are limited local bus services running through the villages, and the community members supporting one another is very important, particularly for elderly people needing access to medical care.

Commerce & Industry

As Piddington is not on a through road it is unattractive to most traditional businesses, which have largely moved out of the village. It has a small pub, The Spread Eagle. The former Methodist chapel is home to the museum of the Upper Nene archaeological society and features finds from the Roman villa remains in fields adjacent to Piddington, which is the subject of a regular annual dig.

Hackleton also has a pub, The White Hart, and a village shop and post office. Mobile vans bring Chinese food and fish and chips to the villages on certain evenings during the week.

Horton includes a boutique hotel and restaurant, The French Partridge.

There are several agricultural businesses in the villages together with a variety of other small businesses without fixed premises such as accountancy, electricians, builders, graphic designers, printers, IT services, and plumbers.

Schools & Education

The one school in the rural parishes is Hackleton CEVA school, a one-form-entry primary school. The benefice schools team regularly offers events such as 'Experience Church'. Clergy and team members also offer regular lessons and assemblies. The school was Ofsted rated Outstanding in February 2020.

The catchment secondary school is in Roade, and school buses collect young people. Others mainly travel to secondary schools in Northampton.

Hardingstone also has a one-form-entry primary school (also served by our schools team), and a 3–18 academy, which is applying to open a secondary school on the new housing development, which could replace Roade school as the local catchment secondary if it is built. Hardingstone is also home to Northampton High School, a 2–18 school owned by the Girls Day School Trust, and which you will come to know if you attend the annual Bishop's Bible Day, which is held there.

Health Care

There are no health facilities or residential care facilities in any part of the benefice. Most people from Piddington with Horton parish go to the health centre in Denton, although some go into Northampton, sometimes travelling as far as Abington to find the care needed.

The nearest dentists are all in Northampton, although it is not uncommon for residents to travel long distances back to places of previous residence in order to use their preferred dentist.

Villagers from Quinton generally go to Roade for medical care and receive social services from Towcester.

The nearest hospitals are in Northampton, although some specialist services are offered at hospitals in Kettering or Daventry. Travel is always a feature of seeking health care for all Living Brook residents.

Other Churches in the benefice

Piddington is the birthplace of William Carey, the ground-breaking Baptist missionary, who came to faith at Hackleton Baptist church, which is now named after its famous son. Carey was married in the parish church in Piddington, and so both churches feature on the 'Carey trail'. Hackleton Baptist church is a good friend and neighbour to Piddington church, and historically looks after Remembrance Sunday events for the villages. Occasional shared services have taken place, but there is scope for greater sharing and co-operation in the future.



Vision and Mission

Our vision

Jesus said: 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water' *John 7.38*

Living Brook is a benefice fed by the living water of God, growing in worship and prayer and in numbers. We want to share that joy-giving, living water with all our communities, that all may be transformed by the love of Jesus.

Our values

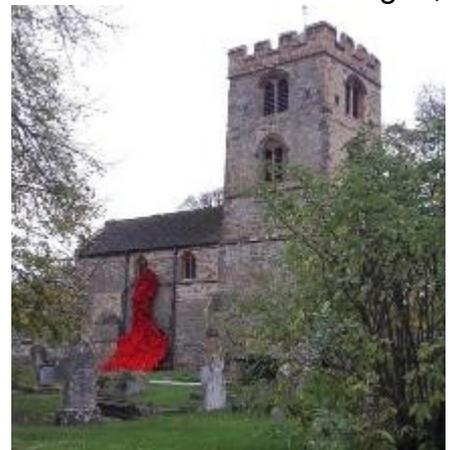
- 🌱 Prayer and Worship
- 🌱 Learning more about the Bible together
- 🌱 Putting children and young people at the heart of the church
- 🌱 Engaging with the community
- 🌱 The 'fifth mark of mission'
- 🌱 Making our church buildings fit to serve the other values.

Whilst coronavirus has made it impossible to maintain the kinds of activities outlined below in 2020, they reflect our normal operation.

St John the Baptist, Quinton serves a small community and sets a high value on regular Eucharistic worship, and opportunities to bring the community together. The nature of the community means that there are currently no children worshipping with the church, but there is a children's area ready for when they come. There is openness to a change in the service provision, but normally services are at 9.30am every Sunday morning, with lay-led morning prayer on the first Sunday of the month and communion on other Sundays. The church owns an unusual reed organ, and church members play this or their own instruments on a rota basis, with music on CD when no organist is available.

Quinton church brings people together especially effectively at Remembrance, when a large handmade 'poppy cascade' graces the outside wall of the church, and for the Christmas Eve 'carols by candlelight' service, which is always a very full church. Although we don't have bells, we do have a sound system that allows us to broadcast the sound of bells, which villagers enjoy hearing on special occasions.

In 2019 the church started an Open Gardens event which drew in hundreds of people from around the area. It is hoped this will be repeated in 2022.



St John the Baptist, Piddington, is a graceful church with a spire that can be seen from some distance. Sunday services are 11am communion on first and third Sundays and 8am communion (common worship order one in traditional language) on second and fourth Sundays. The choir and our organist are present at 11am communions. These services work on an alternate pattern with the church in Hardingstone, but there will be scope to adjust the service pattern on the appointment of the associate priest. The vision is for there to be a service at the same time every Sunday, and to attract people who are not used to attending church. The leadership team are currently exploring the possibility of offering Forest Church as an option.

Piddington church also has a weekly service on Wednesday evenings. Once a month this is a Celtic style eucharist, and otherwise is a reflective and prayerful service including Bible study. A small

group of people attend this service, and it has been the gateway to church for new members, including some who have not been to church before.

Piddington also hosts some special services and sees large numbers at the crib service on Christmas Eve, and good numbers at Midnight Mass on the same day.

Other missional activity is focussed on the schools' team and many volunteers help when the school is visiting the church.

The 'Knit and Natter' group knits for charitable purposes. Meetings are held at the village hall because the church is too large and cold in the winter for a small knitting group.

A mission day in 2019 led to the founding of the 'Inspire choir', a new community choir for the villages, and the church hosted its first performance as part of our annual Christmas Tree Festival and Wassail service in December 2019. The Tree Festival is one of several regular fund-raising events that also serves to draw community members together, along with a popular Harvest Quiz and a Burns Night dinner dance. A wine-tasting evening with a quiz proved equally popular in 2019.

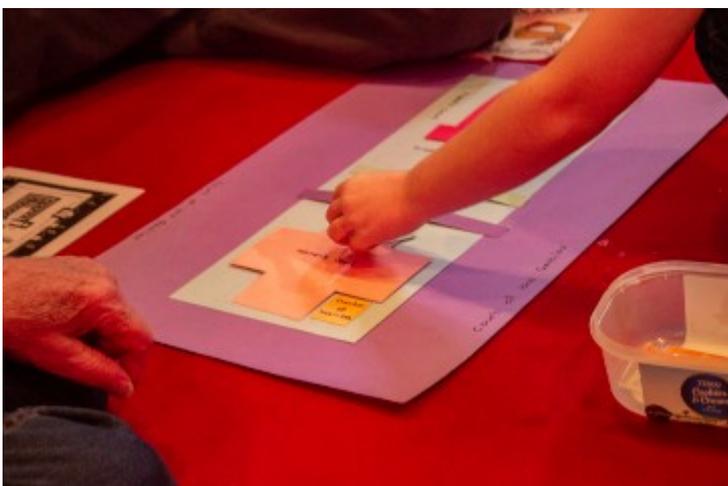
Piddington church also joined the [BCN Churchyard Conservation Scheme](#), following Hardingstone's lead.

Future Direction

In both churches the congregation tends to be of more mature years and our hope would be that you would help us to explore ways to bring in the many younger families and children in our villages.

Going forward, building on our schools' work is vitally important. Some form of worship or discipleship that is welcoming to children is needed, which might include Forest Church or Messy Church in Piddington. Children's activities are offered at services in Piddington, and there is a children's corner which is valued by parents and grandparents. Building on the openings offered by baptisms and weddings is also an important opportunity that we want to make more of.

As Hardingstone works increasingly closely with Northampton St Mary the Virgin, there is greater freedom for the village churches to explore ways forward that are more traditionally rural in approach. Finding ways to connect fully with the agricultural year, recapturing local favourite activities, like celebrating Lammastide, as well as asking how village churches can best respond to the communities they serve in 2021 is important, and we'll be looking to develop a more parish-centred vision that is suited to the more local area rather than to the whole benefice.

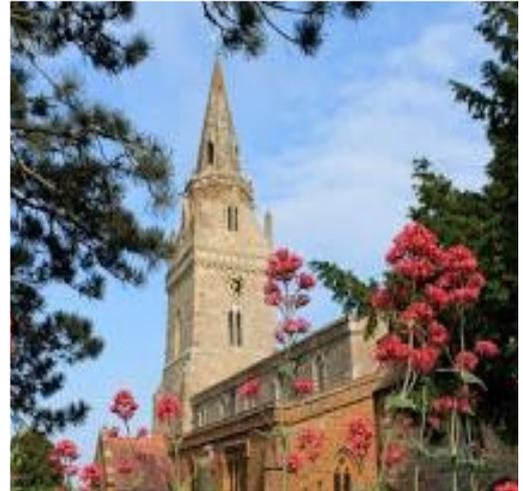


Church Buildings

Piddington

The parish church in Piddington dates to the 13th century, although its spire is a much later addition and is Grade II* listed. The church seats up to 120 people and is adjacent to popular walking routes. Like any church of this age, there are always fabric projects ready to become an excuse for bringing the community together to fundraise. The 2020 quinquennial highlighted the need to repair the tiled chancel roof and the stonework around the west door. We are grateful to Hackleton Parish Council for their support in repairing the clock in 2020. That said, the church is in good condition and is often admired. People appreciate our doors being open every day, and many people stop by to pray.

The churchyard contains one commonwealth war grave, and is closed for burials, though there is a cremated remains area available. Hackleton Council very creatively purchased the land around the church at the time of the closure, for use as a cemetery. This means that we see a good number of church funerals before burials in the cemetery and can normally expect about eight church funerals in a year, in addition to services at the local crematorium.



St John the Baptist, Piddington



St Mary Magdalene,
Horton

The chapel was rededicated to St Mary Magdalene after the formal uniting of Piddington and Horton parishes in 2013 and contains the altar and other items brought over from the now closed church in Horton. St Mary Magdalene is currently in poor repair and is on the Heritage at Risk register. It is closed to the public and permission to view must be agreed by the diocesan secretary. However, the churchyard remains open and in use for burials and for cremated remains, and we have often held pet blessing services outside in the churchyard during the summer as a way of gathering the Horton community at their own churchyard. The Church Commissioners are looking at ways to convert the building to a residence.

Quinton

St John the Baptist Quinton can also trace its roots back to the early Norman period, and has been added to and adapted on several occasions over the centuries. It stands beside the main road that links the villages of Quinton and Preston Deanery and is an important feature of the village. It is in very good



St John the Baptist,
Quinton

order, and a quinquennial is due in the next year or so. The church is Grade II* listed. The churchyard is open for both burials and cremated remains, and features a number of trees, which are particularly valued by the community, as well as a Grade II listed grave dated 1909, made, unusually, of terracotta.

Preston Deanery



St Peter and St Paul,
Preston Deanery

St Peter and St Paul **Preston Deanery** was closed in 1972 and is now under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Valued by the very small community in the hamlet, it has an open churchyard for which Quinton and Preston Deanery PCC is responsible, and which is currently cared for by local villagers. The church is open daily.

Hardingstone

St Edmund, King and Martyr in Hardingstone is also a Norman church, and like Piddington is surrounded by a closed churchyard, except for burial of cremated

remains. It has the largest capacity of the benefice churches, and recently hosted a large funeral on behalf of Quinton church, which can only seat about 90 people safely. St Edmund's PCC are currently exploring the possibility of reordering the interior of the church to enable the growth of midweek work such as the Toddler service and a community café.



St Edmund,
King & Martyr,
Hardingstone

Wellspring



Appropriately named for Living Brook, Wellspring is the house in Wootton Fields which is set aside for this post. A comfortable, modern four bed property in a quiet corner of the estate, the house is only 2 miles from Quinton and 3.5 miles from Piddington. As well as the double garage, there is space for two cars on the drive. A small parade of shops including a Co-op and two take away restaurants are within walking distance, and a park with a play area is opposite the end of the road.

We are, however, considering flexible accommodation situations, as there is a strong preference for you to live in one of our communities.



Sunday and Weekday Services

Worship in Living Brook is central in tradition, with a robed choir and organist/choirmaster supporting the 11am eucharists. Our organist has been in post for over 60 years, having started at the age of 11, and is often invited by neighbouring churches to play the organ for occasional offices. Alb and stole are worn in all churches, with chasubles also used in the two larger churches. Piddington church members are particularly fond of the richly embroidered robes made by the late Margaret Wright, a member of the church.

Congregations express a strong preference for eucharistic worship, and attendance at non-eucharistic services is poor. Across the benefice there is an annual theme, which is expressed in sermon series and courses, including the annual benefice Lent course. In 2020 the teaching focus was prayer, with an emphasis on the Lord's Prayer.

At 8am and 9.30am congregations are generally between 8 and 12 people, while at 11am numbers vary on average between 30 and 40, usually only adults. 'CHAT' children's activity tables offer teaching and craft activities within the church building during 11am services, and all churches offer a children's play area for pre-school children that has been used informally when the church is open on weekdays.

Services at 11am on alternate Sundays in Piddington were cancelled because of low attendance, but it is hoped that it will be possible to restore services at the same time every Sunday. The Wednesday evening service in Piddington usually serves 6-8 people. Changing the service pattern may be an option, as the current arrangement is based on the incumbent's present need to move between three churches, while the associate priest will be able to develop a pattern based on regular, ideally weekly, eucharistic provision for two churches. The table below shows the current structure.

Monthly Service Structure (Pre Covid)

Monthly Pattern	Piddington with Horton	Quinton and Preston Deanery	Hardingstone
First and Third Sunday	11am Holy Communion CW – Sung service	First Sunday: 9.30am Morning Prayer (lay led)	8am Said Communion CW 11am Elevenses@St Edmunds – lay led café style service
Second and Fourth Sunday	8am Said Communion CW	2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th 9.30am Holy Communion CW with hymns	11am Holy Communion CW - Sung service
Fifth Sunday	8am Said Communion CW in Piddington or Hardingstone 9.30am if Quinton or 11am if Piddington or Hardingstone, Benefice Communion Service		
Weekdays	7pm – Wednesday Holy Communion or lay led simple service. Celtic style, quiet said service including Lectio Divina, Bible study or meditation		9.30am – Thursday Toddler Praise. Child centred service followed by play, crafts and coffee

Services during the coronavirus pandemic

This year we have had regular morning prayer services on WhatsApp and streamed Eucharist services on Facebook, and hope (along with everyone else) to return to normality when restrictions are lifted.

When it was possible to meet outside, Eucharist Services were held in churchyards and livestreamed.

Our Wednesday evening service has continued via Zoom. Before Christmas we considered Pastoral Principles from the Church of England website. During Lent 2021 a lay worship leader will lead reflections on Bishop Donald's videos based on the Book of Hebrews.

Lay-led Tuesday prayers commenced in Horton Churchyard in July 2020 and continued until the present lockdown. This service helped to meet a new, real spiritual and pastoral need.

A small Bible study group has continued to meet whenever possible over the last 12 months.

The lay leaders of the Tuesday and Wednesday Services and the Bible study group are committed to continue their leadership once the current (January 2021) lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Other Services

Often the times when people come to join us in worship are holiday occasions, and so we look to make those days as special as possible, and to invite friends and neighbours to celebrate with us and to hear the teaching of Jesus. Highlighting here only the services in Piddington with Horton parish, and Quinton and Preston Deanery parish, these include:

- Christmas: Piddington's annual Christmas Tree Festival early in December includes a popular relaxed 'wassail service'. It is followed two weeks later by an equally popular Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, at which representatives of community organisations read the lessons. On Christmas Eve the crib service in Piddington sees many children dressed in nativity costumes, while the Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight in Quinton has an atmosphere of awe and attracts the largest congregation of the year.
- Lent: an ashing service was recently introduced at our church school, and is followed by a benefice Ash Wednesday service, usually hosted by the Piddington Wednesday service. Services may pick up themes from the Lent course.
- Thank-you service: Lent/Eastertide also includes APCMs, which we arrange in the context of worship. In Quinton this is usually during and following a Sunday eucharist. In Piddington we invite anyone who has helped the church in any way to a service of thanksgiving on a weekday evening, preceded by a buffet and followed by the APCM.
- Holy Week and Easter: Tenebrae is offered on Spy Wednesday, usually hosted in Piddington by the Wednesday service group. Communion of the Lord's Supper has often also been held in Piddington and in Quinton there is a service followed by the Watch at our tiny side altar. Good Friday worship is held in Hardingstone, and Sunday services are held at the usual times for the Sunday of the month, with the Easter fire and lighting of all benefice paschal candles at the 8am service, which includes Easter hymns.

- Pentecost: This is the one Sunday in the year when we change our service time, to worship together jointly at 10.30am. This usually takes the form of an open-air service held on the grassed area in front of Preston Deanery church.
- Patronal services: these are very important to our rural churches and are occasions when we celebrate the closed churches. Evensong is sung in Preston Deanery on the closest Sunday to Pentecost, while the feasts of John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene are celebrated either during the morning eucharist or through a Songs of Praise on the nearest Sunday evening, depending when in our cycle of services the festival falls.
- Harvest: Quinton celebrates Harvest with a Songs of Praise usually on the last Sunday in September or the first in October. Piddington church holds a popular Harvest Quiz on the first Saturday evening in October and follows it with a Harvest eucharist the next morning. Piddington folk also enjoy celebrating Lammastide when they get the chance and have been known to cut grain (with permission!) and grind it into flour in church before baking bread at home for the Lammas communion.
- Remembrance: in Piddington remembrance services and the act of remembrance at the war memorial in Hackleton are led by the minister of Hackleton Carey Baptist church. Anglicans are encouraged to attend these services. In Quinton, a service is usually held at noon, and is organised and led by Major Mike Crouch, a former Army Reserve officer (and currently churchwarden). His is a well-attended service involving young people and community members.
- Other ad hoc services happen when the need or desire arises. Examples include services aimed at engaged and married couples and for remembering loved ones.
- An annual Pet Service held in the churchyard in Horton has been important since the formal closure of the church. An informal service including ice cream at the end (for the humans, not the pets!), is a valued summer event.
- Confirmations and first communion services happen no more than once a year on a benefice basis.
- Baptism services are a regular feature of life in our churches and can be held in morning services or during the afternoon. Across the benefice there were 39 baptism services in 2019, some including multiple candidates. Many of these were held in Hardingstone, but Piddington can expect 6–10 per annum and Quinton one or two.
- As in many other churches, numbers of weddings are declining steeply. In 2020 there were three weddings planned in Piddington, and none were booked in Quinton. Despite this, weddings in our country churches are lovely occasions, and in Piddington they offer a rare occasion to hear the bells being rung, as we are not able to muster a regular team for service ringing.
- Across the benefice there are usually an average of three funerals a month, although averages belie the variance of busy and quiet times. Quinton can usually expect about one funeral per annum, although an aging population may see an increase for a while. Piddington hosts one or two funerals a month



and is the church which is most likely to have a burial after the service, as the parish council cemetery is immediately next door to the church. Both churches have regular funeral (and wedding) vergers, and the organist at Piddington plays for funerals in Quinton. Cremation – whether a full service or committal – is usually at The Counties Crematorium in Milton Malsor, about 15 minutes' drive from the churches, or occasionally at Nene Valley Crematorium, near Wellingborough, which is 20–25 minutes' drive.

- All fees for occasional services are dealt with through the PCCs, and the treasurers pay volunteers and do the quarterly returns, so you will not be expected to handle money beyond passing it on to a treasurer.

Support Available

You will be a member of the Living Brook Ministry Team, which is led by the vicar, and includes the benefice children's leader and safeguarding officer (both of whom are currently on the Licensed Lay Ministry course), the home group leader, benefice schools team leader and a leader who completed the worship leaders certificate. Team members are able to preach and supervise the lay-led worship services, and join in leading courses, such as 'Start', and the Lent course, as well as helping with administration, for example organising coaches for benefice outings, or organising publicity and mailings for All Souls services.

Team meetings include time for prayer, learning and reflection, for developing the vision and mission of the benefice together, as well as the practical things that are needed to make things happen. An annual quiet day together and a Christmas meal help us to keep the team in the sort of close fellowship needed to be effective.

You can also rely on active support from the churchwardens and PCCs, who expect to be actively engaged with the life of the parishes, and organise the fundraising events, rotas for services, and are involved in reading, leading intercessions, eucharistic ministry and the vital work that keeps the fabric and finances of the churches in good order.

You will work closely with the church organist, who is a strong supporter of the clergy and works creatively and flexibly with the vicar. Key to this is an annual meeting in September to look at plans for the following year.

The vicar will be your first line of support and will aim to meet with you regularly for prayer. The pattern for the daily office will be adapted so that prayer can be shared on one of your regular working days. Exactly what form other meetings and support take will be determined with you according to your needs and to fit in with your pattern of work.

Youth and Children's Work

Children are hugely important to us in Living Brook, although there are not many children living in the rural parishes, and as a rule we don't see them regularly in church. Those that do come are able to join in with CHAT (children's activities), or to become young servers.

Provision for pre-school children is via Toddler Praise in Hardingstone, which is run by the benefice children's leader.

Our most important regular work with children is in schools. Co-ordinated by our Schools Team leader, we offer assemblies, lessons and events including an annual mock wedding for reception age children, a mock baptism for year one, an ashing service, church visits aimed at key stage one, and a cycle of 'Experience' station based events which we hold in church and invite the whole school to over a couple of days, usually leaving stations in place for children to bring their families

to see at a later date. We always try to have artwork by children from school on display in church and invite children to take part in special events. The clergy attend special services in school, e.g. carol service, Easter service, Leavers' service, and are usually asked to speak or offer a blessing. Currently, church members are preparing to help the school plant a peace garden.

Ideally, you will be willing to join the governing body of our church school, and to engage actively with the pastoral and spiritual care of the school community.

Church Groups and Activities

Spiritual Growth – the home group meets on Thursday afternoons and focusses on Bible study. The Wednesday evening service in Piddington also functions as a small group, open to all. Occasional groups include an annual Lent course, sometimes led in both afternoon and evenings, and groups set up according to need and interest, such as Start for explorers, Christianity Explored, confirmation courses and courses that develop the annual theme, like Pilgrim. These are generally offered on a benefice-wide basis, although it is noticeable that the venue predicts attendance.

Faith and Fellowship – Knit and Natter on Friday mornings is a valued part of the life of the church in Piddington and includes some non-churchgoers. As the church is cold, and expensive to heat, this group meets in a room at Hackleton Village Hall. Mothers' Union branches long ago lost the local competition with the WI, but we cultivate a good relationship with the WI branches (Hackleton, Quinton, and Hardingstone branches) and sometimes host the carol service. Bell Ringers meet in Piddington on Tuesday evenings, and choir on Monday afternoons.

In both parishes, fundraising and social events bring the community together. In Piddington the annual Burns Dinner and Harvest Quiz, complemented by other events such as a Wine Tasting evening and Boules afternoon, bring people together in numbers. This kind of activity is proving more difficult in Quinton, as the community ages.

Pastoral Care – Pastoral care is important to us and church members visit villagers in Piddington with Horton parish. An annual 'pastoral care open meeting' offers a chance to socialise and hear a speaker who can offer training or insight into an aspect of pastoral care. There is also a member in Piddington who has a license to do home communions and has a list of people to visit with communion regularly. A community prayer list is included once a month in the church newsletter, and names are included only if we know the named person has given permission. The list is updated weekly for intercessors and is prayed through by those attending the Wednesday service. There is also a prayer board in Piddington, and again, the Wednesday service prays for those who leave requests. Quinton, being a much smaller community, operates much more informally, and all church members keep a look out for fellow villagers and ensure that they are appropriately included in prayer.

Community Activities – Quinton and Preston Deanery PCC introduced an Open Gardens event in 2019, which was so well received that we hope to repeat it in 2021. This replaced a long-standing church fete which was popular, but which was short of volunteers to help with. Within the community, other regular events include a traditional May Day celebration, including the Maypole. The village hall is used by community groups, including a games afternoon for elderly residents on Monday afternoons.

Piddington with Horton draws people together through the Christmas Tree Festival. Other local groups (usually meeting in the village hall) include Scouts and Guides, short mat bowls, a drama group, a monthly cinema screening and an 'Inspire Choir', a community choir founded after a church mission day in 2019.

Hackleton has a regular football club meeting on Sunday mornings, Horton has a cricket club, and horse riding is also a popular local pursuit. People also gather around the annual dig at the Piddington Roman villa, and local people volunteer at the village museum, which hosts many school visits from around the area.

Volunteers –Thank you services are a reminder that many people do volunteer to different extents in our churches, including some who don't attend church on Sundays. Both churches have rotas for flower arrangers, cleaners, readers and intercessors. Piddington also has rotas for welcomers, servers, eucharistic assistants, and after service coffee.

Finance

The PCC treasurers manage all fees and returns, expecting clergy to pass them on with a note of what they are for, if not paid electronically. The treasurer of Piddington with Horton PCC is also the benefice treasurer, and she manages payment of expenses centrally, so that claimants can take all claims and payments to a single place.

You will receive expenses in full, including cost of a phone connection to the house (this might be paid for directly, or reimbursed, depending on the kind of phone deal that suits the post holder) and mileage at 45p a mile.

Parish Share is paid in full by the two rural parishes, who will be responsible for the cost of the house for duty post. At present within Living Brook only Hardingstone parish is signed up to the Planned Giving Scheme, as the PCCs of the other parishes prefer to retain full control of giving, and the treasurers are happy to manage gift aid themselves. Giving levels are a concern in Quinton, where those who give are largely elderly, and there is a need in Piddington to wean people away from envelopes towards more stable forms of donation. However, members have responded with generosity to stewardship presentations, and the bulk of income in both parishes is from giving, with fundraising being an extra that largely supports fabric work. Both parishes have adopted a reserves policy that keeps running costs for three months as a minimum level in the accounts.

Both parishes believe in giving a portion of income to charity. Quinton is currently supporting the Hope Centre and makes donations to other local charities at the end of the year. Piddington supports the Makeni Ecumenical Centre in Zambia, an NGO that includes a school and an orphanage and which was founded by the parents of one of our churchwardens.

Organisation

Living Brook does not have a benefice council but does occasionally bring all three PCCs together to consider topics of common concern, especially stewardship. Quinton and Preston Deanery PCC is small, with the churchwardens and clergy joined by two other members. Piddington with Horton PCC is larger, so that it makes sense to delegate some work to subcommittees, primarily fundraising, fabric, and pastoral care. Piddington with Horton's standing committee meets between PCC meetings to set the agenda and to deal with anything that has come up.

The Living Brook ministry team is a support group for the vicar and leads in ministry across the benefice. Similarly, the Children's and Families team, which includes the Schools work team, works across the benefice under the leadership of the clergy.

Person Specification for the associate priest

This is a house for duty post, working two days per week plus Sundays. Although working within a team as an associate, the priest will be the primary leader for the two rural parishes in the benefice and will be delegated the freedom to exercise the ministry of an incumbent there.

You will have had significant experience in church-based ministry, preferably in a rural setting, although if this is not the case a willingness to adapt is important, as the rural context of these two parishes shapes our communities, churches and worship life.

You will be willing to work with the vicar and lay team members, but also to be a clear leader within the parishes, identifiable as the person that the churches and parishioners can turn to for pastoral and spiritual care and guidance, for vision and leadership.

You will

- be committed to a life of prayer and renewing yourself through regular time with God: daily, and in retreats and quiet days, and taking enough rest to ensure that you are fresh for God's work
- understand the needs and challenges of rural churches and the diversity of the Benefice, and apply your insight to your ministry
- lead worship, teach and preach accessibly, and enable lay members to take their place in leadership in worship
- work collaboratively as a member of the benefice ministry team, and with parish teams, and seek and grow new leaders and ministers within the parishes
- be very visible in the villages, visit those needing pastoral care and encourage and oversee lay volunteers
- offer occasional offices, working alongside benefice colleagues where appropriate
- engage with the church school, including delivering assemblies, and other events organised by the schools' team, attending school events and being a part of the governing body
- chair the two PCCs and APCMs
- encourage and action fresh vision appropriate to the local villages, so that the church might grow across all age groups
- take part in community events, raising the profile of the church, and develop the ecumenical relationship with the Baptist church

A position for you?

You've read this profile and God is saying to you: apply for this post! I am calling you to this lovely area near beautiful Salcey Forest to lead my people.

For an informal conversation about the post, or to apply, please contact

The Archdeacon of Northampton, Ven. Richard Ormston, phone 01604 887075

or Email archdeacon.northampton@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

You can learn more about us through the following websites:

Living Brook

<https://livingbrookbenefice.blogspot.com>

A Church Near You

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/19702/benefice/>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/livingbrookbenefice>

Hackleton Parish Council

<https://www.hackletonparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Quinton Parish Council

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

Diocese of Peterborough

<https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk>