



The Benefice of Loddon Reach

The parishes of

- † Beech Hill
- † Shinfield
- † Spencers Wood
- † Swallowfield

"To know Christ and make Him known through a caring, growing and sustainable Christian presence in our Community"

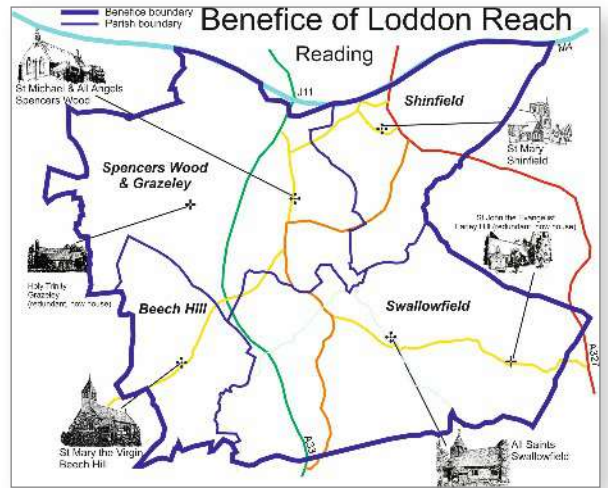
Profile for the Team Rector

Throughout the online version of this document further information may be obtained by clicking on the blue underlined links to other relevant websites.

*For further information please contact the Benefice Office on 0118 988 5923 –
Mon, Tues, Thurs: 2.00pm–5.00pm;
Weds: 9.00am–4.00pm; Fri: Closed
or email office@loddonreach.org.uk*

Introduction

The Benefice of Loddon Reach is a Team Ministry of four parishes located south of Reading between the M4 and the border with Hampshire. They form part of the Deanery of Reading in the Diocese of Oxford.



Foreword from Bishop Olivia

Welcome to the Team profile for the Loddon Reach Benefice. The Team Ministry was established in 2004, and we are looking for a new Team Rector to replace the Revd Paul Willis, who served here from 2015 until his retirement in 2020. A team review has taken place, confirming the current staffing structure, and highlighting the need for the new Team Rector to build up the cohesion of the ministry team (which includes Revd David Little who is the Team Vicar, an active retired priest, a committed SSM priest, and a half time administrator) and the four parishes, and to develop a strategy for mission over the next period of time.

This area south of Reading has seen a large increase in housing, and the mission strategy will need to focus on the needs of this new population. There is funding available to help realise this. It is anticipated that a new Joint Council will be established to hold this vision and strategy, replacing the old Team Council. Developing the role of lay people will be important.

The four parishes (and the team) are different in terms of worship style and theological outlook and the new Team Rector will need to embrace this breadth and enable these different but complementary offers both to nourish those already within their congregations and to embrace the diversity of the surrounding population.

We are looking for someone who understands the dynamics of change and is able to embed themselves in these communities and take these parishes on a journey of growth and development. You will need an easy, relational style, a mature approach to difference and a pragmatic flexibility.

For a candidate with the appropriate level of experience, there is the possibility of additional responsibility as one of four associate area deans for Reading with a focus on the surrounding parishes, joining a team which has oversight of this large and diverse deanery, further described below.

If you would like to discuss this post, do feel free to contact me or the Associate Archdeacon, Revd. Liz Jackson (01635 49390).

+Olivia, Bishop of Reading (0118 984 1216)

Bishop
Olivia
Graham

Person Profile

We wish to welcome as our new Team Rector a dynamic minister of prayer, who has a passion for the gospel and God's word, and has an excitement to spread the love of God in our local communities. Could this be you?

You will know your own strengths and weaknesses, thus you will be able to show that you can offer the characteristics listed below, either in yourself or where you have identified and enabled the gifts of others. So we would like:

- **you to be a leader, developing a cohesive team:**
 - so that you can illustrate having strong leadership where that is needed;
 - and can demonstrate that you can work collaboratively within a team identifying and using the gifts of the team and congregations.
- **you to have a passion for mission and outreach:**
 - so you can show that you can communicate the gospel in different situations, leading people to faith;
 - that you have developed and implemented plans for outreach into new areas;
 - and that you have shown God's love and missional opportunities in the careful provision of the occasional offices.
- **you to have a heart for the younger generation:**
 - having enabled an environment where children and young people are involved in church activities;
 - including demonstrating enabling work in schools;
 - and by encouraging members of congregations to work in this ministry.
- **you to be involved in the community:**
 - so that you can give evidence of Christian activity in wider communities;
 - having a proven ministry among the elderly and in retirement homes.
- **you to come with a good knowledge of how technology can be used in ministry:**
 - that you have kept abreast of the changing technology opportunities and that you can demonstrate that you are aware of potential dangers;
 - and can show a vision and knowledge of how the advantages offered by social media and emerging technologies can be used for the spread of the gospel.

Benefice Vision

We believe God calls us to a new phase as a Benefice. The challenge is to become more cohesive, with better communication and more effective in our mission. We will achieve this by:

- Evolving the existing vision and strategy to unite us as a benefice team, drawing together distinctive churches, with their own identities and resources, who are already keen to work together as one in mission;
- Develop activities to grow cohesion amongst our growing communities;
- Identifying, encouraging and nurturing lay leadership and other lay ministries in our churches;
- Further developing our ministry amongst families and young people;
- Sharing Oxford Diocese's Common Vision to be a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world: fostering Christian formation and discipleship; growing new congregations; schools and young people; addressing poverty and inequality; environmental action at local levels, whilst being aware of and supporting national and global initiatives thus being an outward-looking benefice;
- A determination to lead the Benefice to be at the heart of progress to a 'carbon neutral' existence.

Our Benefice has enormous potential and opportunities and we're looking for a dynamic leader for the next chapter of our story. Someone who is going to get to know and embrace our parishes within the Benefice, respecting our diversity and commonality, share our passion for Jesus and His Kingdom, and our desire for others to come to know the fullness of life that He offers as we endeavour to 'Know Christ and Make Him Known'.



On pilgrimage



Christingle at Swallowfield

Shinfield's post-lockdown Gateway Café



The Job

The agreed staffing for the Benefice is two stipendiary posts: a Team Rector (based in Shinfield) and a Team Vicar (based in Spencers Wood). The previous Team Rector retired in October 2020.

It is anticipated that the relationship between the Team Rector and Team Vicar will be collaborative and that they will apportion responsibilities between them according to their gifts, interests and experience. It is expected that both parties will have an involvement across the Benefice and will work together so that their particular gifts are deployed to best advantage. The Team Rector has overall responsibility for the Benefice, will chair team meetings, facilitate the smooth running of the team, keep abreast of developments in the wider church which might have implications for the Benefice as a whole, and consider innovations which might best be undertaken at Benefice level.

To date, for pastoral purposes, the Benefice has been worked in two halves, with the Team Rector taking primary responsibility for Shinfield and Swallowfield, and the Team Vicar for Spencers Wood and Beech Hill. We would expect the new Team Rector to review this organisation with us.

The Ministry Team

As well as the two stipendiary posts, the team includes a Self-Supporting Minister and an active retired clergy with PTO, who are resident and active in the Benefice, and the Benefice Administrator.

The Benefice Office is based in Shinfield, staffed by a part-time administrator who works 20 hours each week. As well as acting as a central contact point, she undertakes a wide range of administrative duties, including DBS checks, maintaining vital records and looking after both the Benefice and Fees accounts. During the Covid crisis the administrator has performed a vital role in forming the hub for communication throughout the four parishes and pastoral needs amongst many other tasks.

Team Council

The Benefice has a Team Council consisting of three elected members from each parish, one of which must be a churchwarden, together with the licensed ministers of the Benefice. The Team Council meets from four to six times each year.

Our commitment

Our commitment is that in return for the gifts which they bring to us, the successful applicant can be assured of a warm welcome, together with our love, friendship and support as our Team Rector. We respect your need for time off, holidays and retreats. We look forward to working together.

Safeguarding

As a benefice we are fully committed to ensuring the safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our churches and in our activities. We insist that this is of highest priority for the team, volunteers and post holders.

The Benefice

The People

The Benefice of Loddon Reach comprises four parishes: Beech Hill, Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Swallowfield. Each is unique, but together form a welcoming community, open to all with God's love visible; attractive and accessible.

The congregations come from a local community which is very disparate and diverse – on the one hand the increasingly suburban nature of Shinfield and Spencers Wood, on the other the rural nature of Beech Hill and Swallowfield; from the larger populations of the former, growing apace with new estates, to the very small population of Beech Hill. This variety gives us interesting contrasts in ministry: from the challenge of how to visit the new estates as they grow, to the 'everyone knows everyone else' of the smaller villages within the parishes.

The population of the Benefice is approaching 17,000 people with an anticipated growth to over 22,000. Housing ranges from older, often listed, buildings to modern estate buildings. The University of Reading farmed much of the area and this is often reflected in the placing of the new estates as their farming research changed.

Mission and Outreach

Loddon Reach is sitting at a pivotal point in mission and outreach. We are looking for the new Team Rector to enable the congregations to maximise these opportunities.

Firstly, the population of the Benefice has expanded greatly, and will continue to grow, largely due to the large housing estates being developed in Shinfield and Spencers Wood.

Secondly, there is a huge investment by Shinfield Studios, based near the motorway in Shinfield. The initial two sound stages are nearing completion and a further 18 will follow. This will provide 1,500 to 3,000 jobs and potentially a source of income to the Benefice for the use of the churches for filming.

An amount of the order of £152,000 is potentially available, when agreed by the Diocesan Pastoral Committee, from the diocese arising from the sale of two churches in the Benefice in past years, available when a 'strong mission plan' is produced by the Benefice. At present the most popular project would be funding the employment of a children/youth/family worker, or similar, in the Benefice for two to three years, and looking for funding beyond that.

This is an exciting opportunity for the new Team Rector to lead.

Covid-19

We, like the rest of the country, faced an unknown situation in March 2020 when the first lockdown came into force, but within two weeks of the announcement, services started to be streamed online from ministers' homes. Online attendance grew with time and new services were started; this produced a greater benefice cohesiveness as different churches worshipped online together. When in 2021 we were once again able to worship together in church, services continued to be streamed on-line. Covid has moved us on, and we now have most of our churches streaming the in-church services each Sunday.

Children and Youth

Prior to the pandemic there were a number of lively activities across the Benefice, these included: monthly afternoon Tea Service (Messy Church style); a weekly Babes, Mums and Toddler club; a weekly 'Songtime' for a similar clientele; an occasional Saturday morning Dads and Kids club; and a Church Club held after school at the Shinfield Junior school. Post lockdown during Sunday services children are encouraged to take part in services and to complete craft activities at the back of the church. Clergy and laity regularly visit schools to take assembly. Most of these ventures will be open to all across the Benefice.



Baptism at Shinfield

During the lockdown a new Family Service started up on Zoom, this proved surprisingly popular and has developed into a fortnightly Family Service at 9.30 in church. In the main services there can be a children's talk and associated activities for the children to complete.

The Babes, Mums and Toddler Club has reopened and other clubs are pending.

A new occasional club for 10+ children of 10 to 13 years has been started, the need has arisen from the numbers attending the Family Service.

Church club is waiting for direction from the Shinfield Junior school.

There are active uniformed groups across the Benefice with varying degrees of contact. They usually attend the Remembrance Day parades.



An evening at Shepherds Dene

Fellowship and Community

Fellowship is an important part of our daily lives and we join together in a number of Bible study groups, prayer groups and variations on a Compline service. These all continued on Zoom during the lockdown period. Some have continued using this media since, others have returned to meeting face to face.

Growth in faith has been encouraged by running various courses, for example: Christianity Explored; The Way (on a Northumbrian pilgrimage); and Alpha; –

more recently running them over Zoom.

Fetes and similar events occur across the Benefice during the year, some hosted by the church, others where the church is involved in civic events such as the Spencers Wood Carnival and the Shinfield Fun Run.

Other evening events take place from time to time.

Until recently Beech Hill ran a village shop – it is possible that some other similar activity could take place in the future. Spencers Wood ran a successful cafe until the pandemic struck, and steps are being taken to look to the future, and as a first step is opening one day a week. Shinfield ran a

successful 'pop-up' Gateway Café after lockdown, during the summer and autumn months of 2021, and this is being repeated in 2022 with an Easter opening. Swallowfield hosts the 'Coffee Corner' in their Parish Hall, run by volunteers on a weekly basis.

Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media have become a strong part of relating to each other and to the wider community, giving social cohesiveness and a useful channel to disseminate information.

The Benefice enjoys good ecumenical relationships with the Baptist churches in Beech Hill and Shinfield parishes and the ministry teams of the two denominations meet for prayer once a month. Other contacts are with Three Mile Cross Christian Fellowship in Spencers Wood parish and the Ark Christian Fellowship in Swallowfield.

Our Worship

Our worship across the Benefice offers a variety of styles, both formal and informal. Services are a combination of Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic using both Common Worship and Book of Common Prayer. There is a significant use of Celtic liturgies, both in stand-alone services and in forming part of a Common Worship service.

We enjoy strong biblical preaching, largely based around the lectionary, but not being afraid to use other material from time to time.

Our hymnody comes from a wide range of sources, both traditional and contemporary. In two of our churches the worship is led by a robed choir, while the family service is led by our SSM with her guitar.

Laity are strongly involved in all parts of our worship, serving in many roles including leading worship and giving the talks.

Music & the Arts

There is a music group at St Mary's, Shinfield, which joins with the organ at major festivals to lead worship. The Shinfield Remembrance Day parade is another service where their musical skills are much appreciated.

There are a large number of musical events during the year outside worship. For several years St Mary's, Shinfield has provided a venue and an audience for local musicians who have given a monthly lunchtime performance in the church. This has been much appreciated by those who attend. The groups are very varied and consist of all types of instrument ensembles and are sought after by such groups with bookings extending well ahead.

Evening concerts occur from time to time, the Farley Singers, for example, make a regular appearance at Swallowfield with a more classical repertoire.

Occasional arts festivals and exhibitions take place in our churches.

Bells

All four churches have bells. Shinfield and Swallowfield towers have rings of six bells each which are rung regularly for services and practice sessions. The two bands have recently combined and are keen to see more people join them. Quarter peals have been rung for special occasions.

Beech Hill has three bells which are chimed for services. Spencers Wood has a single chiming bell which can be rung for services.

Schools

We have five state schools in the Benefice in the primary age group, three of which are church schools, and one secondary school. Relations between the schools and the churches are close, though we would like to build deeper relationships with the secondary school. We are involved in assemblies and activities across the schools and also in their governance. We are looking to increase the scope of these post-pandemic. The church schools have regular services in our churches throughout the year.

Achievements and Challenges

- Recent achievements include:
 - With only a small break when lockdown was imposed, worship continued throughout the two years, and now has returned to the ‘new normal’;
 - Home groups, study courses, and pastoral work continued through the pandemic using various technologies. Many activities have now resumed face to face;
 - We now stream out one service a week for those who cannot, for any reason, physically attend worship to join with us;
 - There has been a growing together of congregations across the Benefice during the pandemic;
 - A new active family service grew out of the provision during the pandemic – now face to face – along with a new 10+ club;
 - Community events such as fetes, cafés, etc are restarting.
- Things that still present a challenge:
 - We need to build better and stronger communications across the Benefice and local communities;
 - We need to build up the unity of the Benefice while retaining its variety;
 - We still have to encourage some members back into the worshipping community;
 - We have yet to create a strategy for mission to the large estates built, and to be built;
 - We need to become a leader in developing community cohesiveness;
 - We have a long way to go in resourcing mission, identifying, developing and using God-given gifts among the congregations and providing the necessary training;
 - We have to develop new service patterns that will welcome different generations and cultures.

The Ministry Team



The Team Vicar writes:

Having been part of the team in Loddon Reach for over five years I can warmly commend this post to you. Before coming here my background was in press photography and prison chaplaincy, and I have certainly witnessed and experienced first-hand the joys and challenges of life. In ministry I find real joy in discipleship and bible study, and I see it as an essential element if the church both locally and nationally is to grow again. Flowing from this, I see developing a biblical world and life view as a vital component of that

Revd David Little

discipleship. This is very challenging as it often brings God's Word into direct conflict with our present culture, but I believe we are called to be counter-cultural and not just to change with the times. My wife Susan works at Yeldall Manor, a Christian centre which provides residential rehabilitation for men with drug and/or alcohol addictions. It is a place that we are both committed to - seeing how God can really turn lives around even at the third or fourth opportunity.

As a team of four churches, we cherish our individual identities but also yearn to work more closely together in ministry and shared mission. When the four parishes got together to write this profile, we decided unanimously to mingle our various activities together as a sign of our unity and common purpose in wanting to 'make Christ known' here in Loddon Reach. I particularly look forward to working collaboratively with, and in support of, a new colleague, as we engage in gospel-based ministry and together with the whole team, try to discern God's direction for the future in this benefice. Welcome!

David Little - Team Vicar

Our ministry team meets together regularly and at present includes (in alphabetical order) Karen Eaves our Benefice Administrator, Rev Christopher Leslie (PTO), former Chair of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Patronage, Rev David Little our Team Vicar and Rev Cath Spence (SSM) who works full-time at Oxford University.

As with many churches, COVID has brought its challenges as well as its opportunities. We are keen and enthusiastic to restart some existing projects as well as embarking on new ones. We recognise that opportunities within the area are plentiful especially with the new houses being built in the Benefice. We are genuinely excited and enthusiastic for our future together, and praying that you too will sense and help develop our vision for this benefice. One major positive for us of having both an interregnum and COVID to deal with is that it has brought us closer together both as a ministry team, and as congregations as we have worshipped together; learned to care and look out for each other; to study God's word and lead courses; to pray and have fun together. We are really looking forward to welcoming our new Team Rector who will help to build on our existing unity in Christ and lead us forward into our new future together. Welcome.

Karen, Chris, David & Cath

Communication

The Benefice Website

The [Benefice website](#) has now been in existence for several years and is an essential communication source for the Benefice, both within the membership and to the wider community. It is best appreciated by a visit rather than by words!



Communications around the Benefice

Since the closure in 2020 of the Benefice's 'Loddon Reach' magazine – a variably 64–80-page, A5 full-colour publication, distributed free to all households in the Benefice since 2008 – the Benefice has had to learn to communicate through other channels. We now have a weekly Benefice Newsletter that is circulated to several hundred people across all four churches. It gives information on all four churches and the services that are taking place. The centre page often highlights an event that has happened in one of the Churches.

Each church has a communication leader and they have been responsible for the circulation of the newsletter via email. During the pandemic many have included details for food banks, CAB and local Parish Council information.

WhatsApp groups have formed within communities and this has been an excellent way of keeping an eye on the more vulnerable. Facebook has played a major part in disseminating information to a larger audience. The website displays up-to-date information on services, events, life events and other resources that individuals might find helpful.

Other denominations

As is typical of many rural areas, the number of other denominations located within the Benefice is small. Across the greater Reading area there is a wider variety of denominations, some serving significant geographical areas.

Baptist

There are two Baptist churches in the Benefice: [Shinfield Baptist Church](#) and [Beech Hill Baptist Church](#).

Roman Catholic

[Christ the King Roman Catholic Church](#) to the North of the M4 serves the Benefice.

URC, Methodist and Anglican LEP

[Trinity Church](#), Lower Earley

Other

Within the Benefice there is an Exclusive Brethren church based in Shinfield, the [Three Mile Cross Church](#) based in Three Mile Cross (parish of Spencers Wood), [Bright Hope Church](#) which meets in Grazeley Village Hall and the [Ark Christian Fellowship](#), meeting in Swallowfield Parish Hall.

Further outside the Benefice the options are too numerous to list. For more information it may well be worth visiting the websites of [Churches Together in Reading](#) and [Churches Together in Wokingham](#).

Education in and around the Benefice

Within the Benefice we have five schools catering for the primary age group, two of which are Voluntary Aided Church of England Schools, and two are academies, parts of the [Circle Trust](#) and the [Keys Academy Trust](#). The secondary age group is catered for by [Oakbank](#) – a free school, and by schools outside the Benefice.

The ministry team is involved in each of the schools, taking collective worship on a regular pattern and as ex officio governors in the two VA schools. Members of the congregations are also involved with the schools in many ways including being Foundation Governors. There is a weekly after school Church club at St Mary's Junior School, Shinfield.

Details of all the schools that serve the Benefice may be obtained from their websites, links to which are included in [Appendix 2: Schools in and around the Benefice](#).



Beavers learning about the church at All Saints, Swallowfield

Finance

The Benefice overall and each of the individual Parishes are financially viable with expenditure broadly being balanced by income. Although each Parish does have some reserves, in the main we are dependent upon current income generated by a mix of regular givers, in-church collections and fundraising events. All Parishes make use of Gift Aid whenever possible. The Benefice Office and expenses are funded by a monthly contribution by each parish. The Benefice paid its Parish Share in full by the required dates, and thereby recovered a refund. Ministers' expenses are paid in full through the Benefice account.

The summary accounts below are the last before Covid-19 lockdowns; the accounts for 2020 and 2021 do not give an accurate reflection of the Benefice's finances. Full accounts are available on request from the Benefice Office.

Summary accounts¹

Parish Accounts 2019	Beech Hill ²	Shinfield	Spencers Wood	Swallowfield	Total
Income					
General / Cash Income ³	£16,632	£88,511	£64,361	£28,232	£197,736
Gift Aid (recovered from HMRC) ⁴	£1,995	£10,766	£8,586	£4,560	£25,907
Investment Income	£86	£0	£1,131	£5,575	£6,795
Total	£18,712	£99,277	£74,078	£38,370	£230,438
Outgoings					
Parish Share	£9,509	£33,084	£23,479	£21,344	£87,416
General Outgoings	£6,356	£29,323	£32,786	£15,795	£84,260
Maintenance	£1,050	£7,481	£286	£0	£8,817
To Benefice A/C	£2,832	£7,050	£5,865	£5,627	£21,374
Donations	£300	£895	£4,771	£1,000	£6,966
Total	£20,047	£77,183	£67,187	£43,766	£208,183

Benefice account 2019	
Income from parishes ⁵	£21,300
Total Income	£21,300
Expenses of ministers	£5,576
Administrative costs – including staff	£17,187
Total expenditure	£22,763

¹ Income/Expenditure is not directly comparable between Parishes, e.g. Spencers Wood financials include Caf'Active; Shinfield's include St Mary's Church Hall.

² The closure of the shop at Beech Hill means that there are exceptional items in their outgoings which are balanced by a gain in fixed assets in the form of a toilet, cupboards and other items

³ This figure is a wide-ranging figure and includes, for example, various fund raising events such as fetes and, in the case of Shinfield, hire fees from the church hall

⁴ The parishes recover Gift Aid through various schemes and the figures here may not represent the full recovery, some of which will be included in the line above

⁵ This figure may not agree with that in the parishes accounts as payments are made at different points in the year

The Rectory



The Rectory is a David Wilson home built in 2000. Unlike most rectories it is an 'off-the-peg house' built to 'executive homes' standard. The house is well above the Church Commissioners' 'green book guide' standard rectory and is in a quiet development about 300 yards from Shinfield St Mary's church.

The total area is about 2,200 sq. ft., with five bedrooms, (two en suite) three doubles, two single or very small double; family bathroom and airing cupboard. The staircase is central and rises via a sub-landing and a pair of short stairs to a galleried landing from which French windows lead out onto a small balcony overlooking the front.

The ground floor consists of a large kitchen, a utility room, a dining room, a sitting room and two other rooms. One of these is the study and has an external door direct to the porch, the only modification made by the Diocese when they bought the house. The other, smaller, room could be a second study as it currently is. There is also a downstairs cloakroom.

The loft is accessed from the landing and is partially floored.

There is a triple garage with ample tarmacked parking in the front. There is a large border between the garage, parking and the pavement. The back garden is about 50 ft square, with a lawn.



Revd Mike Smith

Reading Deanery

Loddon Reach Team Ministry is situated within the Reading Deanery and represents its southern boundary. As a rural benefice, it feels somewhat different from the rest of the largely urban and suburban deanery. The Benefice is, however, very important to deanery life and helps us to focus on a broader range of issues away from the priorities of urban living. It is important to the deanery that we get this appointment right and attract the person God is calling to the Team Rector's role. The opportunities for growth in capacity in the existing churches, and through mission and ministry in new areas, including the large amount of new housing, is a priority to the deanery.

With its 29 parishes covering 24 benefices, the Deanery has one of the largest Synods in the country, despite covering a relatively small geographical area focused largely on the town itself. We have an active and well-attended Chapter, which meets regularly throughout the year. We work closely with churches from all denominations, particularly through the "Transform Reading" and "Churches Together" networks.

The concentrated nature of Reading provides many opportunities to work together to bring God into the day-to-day lives of the town and the 250,000 people for whom it is home. The Deanery's Mission Action Plan (MAP) seeks to enable its parishes to deliver the underlying missional aim of making a difference in the world, by improving capacity for confident, collaborative leadership, creating vibrant Christian communities, and making disciples.

The leadership structure of the Deanery has recently been reconfigured to foster a culture in which lay people and clergy work closely together, and to encourage and enable people to connect in more locally focused groups. To this end, we have established a leadership team of Area Dean and Lay Chair supplemented by a team of Assistant Area Deans and Lay Chairs, working across four geographical parts of the deanery. Each pair of Area Dean and Lay Chair provides frontline support to clergy and parishes. Loddon Reach forms part of the East and South group of seven benefices, and any day-to-day pastoral and operational issues which require Deanery input will be dealt with at that local level.

Broader issues such as Parish Share continue to be discussed and decided at a Reading-wide level. The Deanery is served by an effective and enthusiastic Synod, whose meetings are structured to balance these administrative duties with opportunities to share good news and good practice, and to engage with a range of topics affecting the whole Church. We look forward to welcoming the new incumbent of Loddon Reach and working alongside him or her within this forum.

Revd Mike Smith, Assistant Area Dean

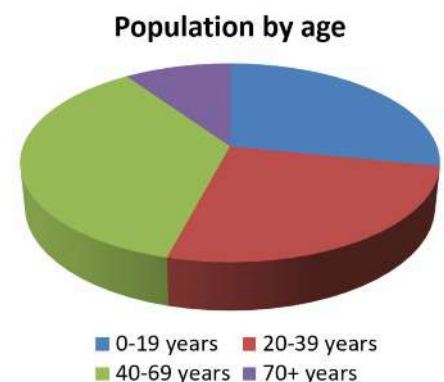
Appendix 1: Additional details of the Benefice

Introduction

The Benefice of Loddon Reach was created by Order in Council in March 2005. The constituent historical Benefices (the Benefice of Beech Hill, Spencers Wood and Grazeley, the Benefice of Shinfield and the Benefice of Swallowfield) that form the Benefice of Loddon Reach have evolved along parallel but separate lines over many years. However, the units have much in common because the Benefice covers an area closely approximating to the medieval parish of Shinfield, from which was divided the parishes of Swallowfield (1847), Grazeley (1850) – now closed – and Spencers Wood (church built 1908, new parish 1914).

Population and demography⁶

The northern parts of the Benefice are earmarked as a Strategic Development Location by Wokingham Borough Council, but it is likely that the southern part will remain largely rural. The results of the 2021 National Census have not yet been released but the total population in mid- 2021 is approaching 17,000 persons⁷.



Amenities, infrastructure and employment

There is a variety of shops, stores and other retail facilities in Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Swallowfield, but a high proportion of the inhabitants undertake shopping trips to larger stores in and around Reading, Wokingham and Basingstoke.

The southern part of the area falls within the catchment of the Swallowfield Group Medical Practice, with the northern part served by Shinfield Medical Centre at School Green, which includes Shinfield Dental Practice (NHS).

The Shinfield Parish Council provides playgrounds, allotments and maintains footpaths throughout the Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Grazeley area, whilst Swallowfield Parish Council provides similar services in Swallowfield, Farley Hill and Riseley.

Traditionally there have been some small businesses within the Benefice, but recent developments include Shinfield Studios, a major film production company, which will eventually produce some 3,000 job opportunities; the British Museum storage unit; and other units on the University Science Park. It also forms a dormitory for many people who work in Reading, Wokingham or London.

⁶ Source: City Population at <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/southeastengland>

⁷ Sources: Beech Hill Parish Council; Shinfield Parish Council; Swallowfield Parish Council.

Parish figures (based on annual returns for 2019)

We have used figures for 2019 as being the last set of realistic figures before the onset of Covid-19.

	Beech Hill	Shinfield	Spencers Wood	Swallowfield
Population (2021) ⁸	300	13,500 ⁹		2,978
ER	35	64	53	63
ASA	18	43	44	22
Baptisms	3	7	6 plus 3 thanksgivings	3
Weddings	3	1	0	6
Funerals	1 in church, 0 at crematorium	5 in church, 3 in crematorium	5	5 in church, 5 at crematorium
Easter numbers	attendance 49	attendance 87	attendance 40	attendance 107
	communicants 24	communicants 66	communicants 30	communicants 72
Christmas numbers ¹⁰	attendance 85	attendance 655	attendance 267 ¹¹	attendance 392
	communicants 50	communicants 123	communicants 36	communicants 57

Benefice service pattern (as at November 2021)

This information comes from a time where the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns and other restrictions had only recently passed.

Within a few weeks of the onset of lockdowns for Covid, various arrangements were made to provide a streamed service provision across the Benefice. There were two 'sets' of services, one largely covering Shinfield and Swallowfield consisting of a 10am Family Service and a 11am Agape service each Sunday; and the other in the form of an Agape covering Spencers Wood and Beech Hill at 10:30.

This maintained the worshipping numbers as far as possible and allowed the introduction of a weekly family service for the Benefice which was a new innovation and was very popular. On returning to church this necessitated some rearrangement of service times to accommodate this new service on a fortnightly basis – this revised rota is shown on the following page.

Other activities continued during the pandemic covering bible study groups, prayer groups and other meditative service; together with monthly meetings of the Mothers Union.

The following table is in the 'traditional' form and shows the overall service pattern as we came out of lockdown in 2021.

⁸ The population figures are based on data obtained from Wokingham Borough Council (amazingly very little); Beech Hill Parish Council; Shinfield Parish Council (which covers both Shinfield and Spencers Wood parishes); and Swallowfield Parish Council.

⁹ It is impossible to separate the population figures for Shinfield and Spencers Wood which from the Parish Council's viewpoint are in the same ward. There are very significant plans for building in the Shinfield & Spencers Wood parishes, the best estimate from Shinfield Parish Council is that the population may well grow to 19,500 over the next 5 years.

¹⁰ There is a small measure of 'double counting' here as some people attended more than one Christmas service

¹¹ St Michael's did not have a Christmas Day service; there was a joint service at Beech Hill

Sunday	Shinfield ¹²	Swallowfield	Spencers Wood	Beech Hill
1	09:30 Family Service 10.30 CW Communion	08:00 BCP Communion 10:30 1st Sunday Service	10:30 Morning Worship	09:30 Morning Worship
2	08:00 BCP Communion 10:30 Morning Worship	10:30 CW Communion	10:30 CW Communion	09:30 Morning Worship
3	09:30 Family Service 10:30 CW Communion	08:00 BCP Communion 10:30 Morning Worship	10:30 People's Praise	09:30 CW Communion
4	08:00 BCP Communion 10:30 Morning Worship	10:30 CW Communion	10:30 Morning Worship	09:30 Morning Worship
5	08:00 BCP Communion at Shinfield or Swallowfield 10:30 CW Communion (rotates around the churches)			

The service pattern above is a formal representation of the current working of the Benefice.

The new ministry team may well want to review the present service pattern in the light of changing needs and available staffing.

Poppies for the Swallowfield War Memorial



Harvest Supper at Spencers Wood



Brass polishing in Beech Hill



¹² Prior to the pandemic there was a regular evening service, this is hoped to be reinstated during 2022

Appendix 2: Schools in and around the Benefice

This appendix largely gives the details of the websites concerned where further information may be found:

Schools in the Benefice

Primary age group

[Farley Hill School](#) (LA) (recently moved to Arborfield Parish)

[Grazeley Parochial Primary School](#) (VA)

The Team Vicar is the ex officio Governor of this school.

[Lambs Lane School](#) (LA)

[Shinfield Infant & Nursery School](#) (an academy, part of the [Circle Trust](#))

One of the Shinfield Churchwardens is Chair of Local Advisory Board

[Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School](#) (VA)

The Team Rector is the ex officio Governor of this school.

[Alder Grove CofE Academy](#) (in its second year of opening, part of the [Keys Academy Trust](#).)

The Benefice has governors on this school and a representative on the trust

Secondary age group

[Oakbank School](#) (Free)

This school is a secondary school in the parish and is a Free school.

Schools serving the Benefice

Primary age group

[Mortimer St John's CofE Infant School](#) (VC) (serving the parish of Beech Hill)

[Mortimer St Mary's CofE Junior School](#) (VA) (serving the parish of Beech Hill)

Secondary age group

Secondary schools whose catchment areas for 2021/22 cover the Shinfield area are:

[Bohunt School](#)

[The Emmbrook School](#)

[The Forest School](#) (Boys)

[The Holt School](#) (Girls)

[St Crispin's School](#)

[The Willink School](#) (serving the parish of Beech Hill)

[Kendrick School](#) (Reading, Grammar, Girls)

[Reading School](#) (Reading, Grammar, Boys)

Independent schools

There are several independent preparatory and secondary level schools in the area, some offering bursaries for clergy children. Information on these can be provided.

Further Education

[Reading University](#)

[Reading College](#)

Wedding at Spencers Wood



Remembrance Service in Swallowfield



All Saints' Church Fete afternoon teas



Contents

Introduction	2
Foreword from Bishop Olivia	2
Person Profile	3
Benefice Vision	4
The Job	5
The Benefice	6
The People	6
Mission and Outreach	6
Covid-19	6
Children and Youth	7
Fellowship and Community	7
Our Worship	8
Music & the Arts	8
Bells	8
Schools	9
Achievements and Challenges	9
The Ministry Team	10
Communication	11
The Benefice Website	11
Communications around the Benefice	11
Other denominations	11
Education in and around the Benefice	12
Finance	13
Summary accounts	13
The Rectory	14
Reading Deanery	15
Appendix 1: Additional details of the Benefice	16
Introduction	16
Population and demography	16
Amenities, infrastructure and employment	16
Parish figures (based on annual returns for 2019)	17
Benefice service pattern (as at November 2021)	17
Appendix 2: Schools in and around the Benefice	19
Schools in the Benefice	19
Schools serving the Benefice	19