



## THE DRAYCOTE BENEFICE

In the Diocese of Coventry, at the heart of Warwickshire, the Draycote Benefice comprises four rural parishes with four churches, at the heart of each village.

- ❖ All Saints' in Stretton on Dunsmore with Princethorpe
- ❖ St. Leonard's in Birdingbury
- ❖ St. Nicholas' in Frankton
- ❖ St. Peter's in Bourton on Dunsmore with Draycote

[www.draycotegroup.org.uk](http://www.draycotegroup.org.uk)

in partnership with

## THE LEAM VALLEY BENEFICE

The Leam Valley benefice comprises four small villages with five churches. We reflect in many respects the joys and challenges of many small, rural multi-parish benefices.

- ❖ St Mark's in Flecknoe
- ❖ St Peter's in Grandborough
- ❖ All Saints' in Leamington Hastings (with Church of the Good Shepherd, Broadwell)
- ❖ St Nicholas in Willoughby

[www.leadvalleychurches.co.uk](http://www.leadvalleychurches.co.uk)

“Our vision is to work  
with one heart to  
become examples that  
inspire our communities  
to come to faith and to  
share the transformative  
power of God's love.

### Re-imagining leadership in rural ministry

We are looking for a leader with the skill and passion to shape and implement our vision to create a framework for missional growth and administrative efficiency in our area. This is a vision in which rural ministry is thriving and all who serve are equipped, trained and empowered. Ultimately, we will be a benefice of nine parishes, creating a great opportunity for a leader to reshape how we do things. **We need someone special. Is this you?**

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## 1. Bishop's introduction

The Draycote benefice is a good example of how a rural, multi-parish benefice can thrive during a vacancy. The lay leadership have built on good foundations and developed some excellent lay-led initiatives across the benefice which are already bearing good fruit. In their new incumbent they are looking for a leadership style that seeks to train and empower them further. With a real heart for the gospel in a rural context, they want to be missional, which is hugely encouraging. This is not just a futuristic wish. Some of these missional activities and events have already begun. Creative missional thinking within the deanery has enabled the development of this post as a full-time role rather than, as previously, a House for duty post. Subject to a new pastoral scheme it is proposed to link the benefice with the neighbouring Leam Valley group, with a view to recruiting another whole-time post to develop a sustainable model for rural mission and ministry.



I have been impressed by the lay leadership I have seen in the Draycote group, and the willingness and vision of Leam Valley to work well together. They are committed to make this role do-able, and I believe it will be fun working with them. There is genuine openness to trying new things.

My hope and prayer is that a priest dedicated to the training and empowering of laity, and committed to the gospel in a rural context, will be drawn to the potential of this role and feel called to take up its very attractive opportunities.

With my prayers

+ Christopher

## 2. Deanery summary

The Rugby Deanery is one of the largest in the diocese of Coventry and was the first in the diocese to formulate a Deanery Plan. A new simpler and more equitable system for determining parish share in the deanery was implemented for 2020. Overall, the plan gives a framework for the closer working together of parishes on issues of mutual concern and enables us to look at mission and ministry in a more cohesive way in a changing environment. Due to all the new housing and infrastructure being built across the town, along with a number of clergy vacancies in the deanery, a second plan is in progress to shape the church for mission. This was a major opportunity to make some much-needed alterations to parish and benefice structures.



This post is part of the plan to shape our rural areas, north and south of the town, into two larger benefices. If we are to grow God's kingdom in our rural parishes, we need to change the way we think about mission and ministry. Traditionally Incumbents have worked part-time on a 'House for Duty' basis, but we now know this is unsustainable. Part-time clergy feel isolated trying to serve too many communities and excessive time is spent on building maintenance and administration.

This new model seeks to install an outstanding full-time Incumbent who thrives on equipping, developing and empowering others. A primary objective for the successful candidate will be to introduce the most effective model for structuring and staffing this benefice. For immediate support, there are both Associate Minister and PTO Clergy, and an enthusiastic leadership group of Church Wardens, keen to consider creative and new ways of driving missional growth. Initially, the full-time Incumbent will be appointed to the Draycote Benefice but will immediately take on the four parishes of

the Leam Valley Benefice, and work towards a full merger. Upon the retirement of their Incumbent, the parish of Ryton will also be incorporated bringing significant extra population and resource.

The plan is for the new Incumbent to create a structure of clergy and laity who will work together bringing complementary gifts and experience to encourage the churches in their mission and ministry, releasing the missionary energies of existing church members while encouraging those on the fringes to engage more. Our growing focus is on Clergy and Laity working more closely together in the deanery, and a number of initiatives have helped us do this. A Church Wardens' Forum meets quarterly to discuss areas of mutual concern and encourage and support each other. We are introducing similar for Treasurers.

The Deanery Chapter meets once a month for lunch, prayer and support. During lockdown we have met regularly on Zoom. We are quite a large group (18 when all posts are filled) which makes for a great atmosphere. There is always much fun and laughter at our meetings! Before lockdown, the previous two years have seen the chapter focussing more on prayer and mutual support and it tries to keep business brief and to a minimum. The result of this has been a deeper drawing together of clergy in the Deanery. In previous years we have shared together in a pastoral/team building exercise by having a day trip on a canal barge with pub lunch.

The Rugby Deanery is in the North and East of the County of Warwickshire, bordering the Dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough. There are 29 Parishes both urban and rural. Most of the population resides in the rapidly expanding town of Rugby and its suburban housing estates (around 70,000 according to 2011 census data) with another 30,000 living in the surrounding areas. Rugby Deanery is a great place to live and to work. We have a progressive DMPC who are committed to fostering a spirit of collaboration and cooperation across the deanery. and we hope that you seriously consider applying for this challenging and exciting post. You can find out a little more about the deanery and all the deaneries in the diocese by [viewing the deanery video](#).

**Tim Cockell,**  
Area Dean of Rugby

### 3. Our vision and values

**Our vision is to work with one heart to become examples that inspire our communities to come to faith and share the transformative power of God's love.**

We have a sense of togetherness within the benefice to achieve our mission and a strong desire to meet the needs of all people, wherever they are on the journey of faith. **We are seeking someone who yearns to create an exciting and dynamic team, committed to bringing that vision to fruition** and are putting our trust in God that he will lead the right person to us, fostering a sense of stability, yet concerned with growth. Our churches are deeply valued by our communities. In normal times they are all open every day for people to worship, pray or simply sit quietly. The commitment of the churchwardens and PCCs and the involvement of many lay community members enables the four parishes to co-ordinate worship, community events and pastoral care. We work together as a team to put our vision into practice with energy and enthusiasm, showing creativity, respect and sensitivity. But we know we need to grow.

During the pandemic, with our churches closed, we continued to show God's love in our communities in other ways. We shared prayer and information on our social media groups, liaising with parish councils to co-ordinate volunteers and spending a lot more time on the phone. We embraced online meetings, services and prayers. Our villages pulled together in inspiring ways with many people volunteering practical and emotional support. This pandemic will change us all and will change the way church operates and we know we need to be ready for this. We are responding to changing

circumstances and our congregations' needs by holding in church and online worship as we move towards a return to regular worship.

We work closely with the Church of England Primary school in the benefice to nurture the Christian faith in our young people. As a benefice we have developed a number of initiatives to encourage more people to become involved in the life of the church. This is an ongoing challenge which we are working on with the commitment of the PCC's and others.

## 4. The Role

The primary purpose of this post is to provide spiritual and strategic leadership to both the Draycote and Leam Valley Benefices to fulfil missional objectives. This Diocese uses the NCD Eight Essential Qualities in the life of a healthy church as a tool to measure both health and growth;

- Empowering leadership
- Gift orientated Ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Inspiring worship
- Holistic small groups
- Need orientated outreach
- Loving relationships
- Functional structures

**The post is full-time stipendiary. The appointee will be tasked with creating a support structure of clergy and laity in discussion with the DMPC.**

The appointee will provide leadership and spiritual development to:

- Inspire in us, across all our parishes, a need to worship, pray and develop our faith, individually and together, building in us a true longing to further God's kingdom
- Create and build an efficient structure, including the development of a Benefice Council overseeing missional strategy, communication, administration and finance
- Consider the longer-term purpose of separate PCC's, proposing and developing alternative solutions for local-level parish leadership
- Formulate and develop ministry-led teams equipped to deliver worship and prayer in creative, innovative and inspiring ways
- Create lay teams equipped, trained and empowered to provide pastoral support and deliver other ministries, including schools and the elderly, across the Benefice

The candidate will also:

- Work cooperatively across Rugby deanery, supporting the Area Dean and other clergy, sharing skills, ideas and resources and taking an active role in Chapter and Deanery meetings and wider communication

## Person Specification

We welcome applications from priests who meet these essential criteria:

- Experience of directing change that leads to growth
- Clear leadership skills including identifying, training, developing, equipping and empowering others
- A heart for rural mission growth and a passion for sharing an active Christian faith through teaching and engaging with people of all ages and orientations, as well as our Church of England primary schools
- Able to think about mission in creative and innovative ways, communicating ideas in a clear and engaging style, but seeking the views and opinions of others through collaborative consultation and efficient resource management

- An engaging manner with the ability to nurture relationships with people of all ages

## 5. Praying and praising are at the core of the benefice

We aim to make all our services of worship inspirational and to meet the needs of everyone, wherever they may be on their Christian journey. Our normal service pattern within the benefice includes both Eucharistic and lay-led worship each Sunday. These Sunday services are supplemented by informal services in village halls, gardens and on farms as well as home communion.

**Celebrate@4**, held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month, recently had its 6th birthday. This lay-led service has built a following of young families and others who prefer an informal style of worship. It is held mostly in a village hall and features videos, drama and creative

*“My son looks forward to coming each time. Celebrate is an answer to prayer for me.”*

prayers. The newly-formed worship band plays both contemporary and traditional music, and activities are laid on for children. The teaching is suitable for all ages and there is always tea and cake!



*“Prayer and worship are intrinsically linked to bring us closer to God.”*

**Church in the Hall** is held on the first Thursday of the month at Bourton, Draycote and Frankton Village Hall. The short lay-led service with a thought for the day is followed by fellowship and refreshments. Easy access provides an opportunity for those with mobility problems to be involved.

We want to continue these varied forms of worship so our worshipping communities can choose the style of worship that suits their need. Our challenge is to encourage more people to worship across the wider benefice rather than only in their own parish church, thereby maximising the choice available to them.

Prayer is central to our Christian life. Across the benefice we have regular home groups, weekly morning and night prayer, and enjoy quiet reflective sessions during Advent and Lent. Our active benefice prayer chain circulates confidential prayer requests from anyone in need. The challenges within Draycote benefice are not so different to many rural parishes. Currently our numbers are small but with the right incumbent we have great potential to grow this rural worshipping community.

### Our usual Sunday service pattern

	Holy Communion 10.30 am	Family Worship 10.30 am	Evening Worship 6.00 pm
First Sunday	Frankton (Spoken BCP)	Bourton	
Second Sunday	Birdingbury	Stretton	
Third Sunday	Bourton	Frankton	Stretton
Fourth Sunday	Stretton	Birdingbury	
Fifth Sunday	Benefice Holy Communion service in each parish in turn		

## 6. Living our faith in the community

We follow up our warm welcome in church with opportunities to form friendships and to be encouraged in faith through our events and activities. There are a number of joint initiatives that bring our communities together in fellowship across the benefice, as well as those described in the details of individual parishes.

### Holiday Bible Club

During the summer holidays we usually hold a week of play and praise for children of primary school age at Knightlow School. Daily worship, craft activities and outdoor play all follow a theme – our last in 2019 was Pirates. Over recent years between 30 and 40 children have attended. These sessions are popular with both children and parents and feedback has been extremely positive. A dedicated group of committed adults supervise, but we need to work on succession planning to make this venture sustainable.

### Men's breakfast

Each month on a Saturday morning, between 15 and 25 men from across the benefice meet for a cooked breakfast in the village pub in Stretton. A speaker provides food for thought and discussion. This event is an excellent opportunity to engage with irregular church goers.

### Global Care partnership

Over recent years we have supported 'Shack Schools', a Global Care project. Shack Schools provide access education to some of the most damaged Syrian refugee families living in the Bekaa Valley. We committed ourselves to raising £1,500 per year for three years and comfortably exceeded this amount every year. A secondary objective was to raise awareness in our community of the plight of refugees across the world. We are taking a break from fund raising presently as we face other priorities during our vacancy, but we are exploring the possibility of helping another project in the developing world.

### Care for the environment

We are committed to improving our care for the environment and working with our communities to encourage lifestyle changes that show reverence for God's creation. We accept that God's creation is in crisis. We welcome the recent decision of General Synod to compel the C of E to become a net carbon zero organisation by 2030. This will be challenging for everyone but also represents an opportunity. Some of our churches are Eco Church members and have undertaken a Green Journey audit. However, there is much to be done and we know that the time to act is now.

## 7. Inspiring the next generation

Everyone at Knightlow C of E Primary School feels privileged to be a part of the Draycote Benefice and to be able to work in partnership with our foundation governors, the worship team, members of the church congregations and the local communities for the benefit of our children. As a

*"We want to create a strong Christian foundation in our community."*



single form entry village school, many of our families live within the Draycote parishes and the school has a very positive, and fruitful relationship, with the church, which we want to continue and build upon.

For us, the links with the church run deeper than just maintaining our Christian character, and are founded on a strong relationship between us, the incumbent, and the worship team from the benefice. This relationship allows us to show the children what faith can mean in their lives, and incorporates acts of worship, learning about Christianity in action, delivering a rich and imaginative R.E. curriculum, seeing the church as a place for all people, and engaging in creative prayer and reflection.

The children and the staff have enjoyed getting to know their vicar as someone who is interested in them and who is able to demonstrate what it means to be a practising Christian. They love to learn more about the Bible, and we try to seek different opportunities for them to build their understanding and express their own thoughts and beliefs openly and honestly. During the vacancy, our enthusiastic worship team are maintaining and reinforcing this important link. There is a Governor vacancy which is normally filled by the Incumbent.

## 8. Unique qualities of each parish

While we strive to work together as far as possible, each of our parishes has unique qualities and strengths. Here, the adjoining parishes of Draycote and Leam Valley and have much in common. Indeed until 2006, Birdingbury formed part of the Leam Valley group. Many of our strengths and weaknesses are comparable, and we share a strong desire for a leader who will help us to grow in our faith whilst creating new disciples in our communities. Our churches have small, but faithful, congregations and pastoral care is strong. Our community activities are similar, and we are optimistic that we will all benefit from sharing experience and skills.

- [More detailed descriptions of our individual parishes and churches](#)

## 9. Commitment to safeguarding and pastoral care

We are committed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policies and have an appointed Benefice Safeguarding Officer. Organisation for pastoral care varies across the benefice. Local knowledge is the key to it all.

- Stretton has a 'Good Neighbours' scheme, dividing up the village into areas where parishioners undertake to look out for and be aware of the needs of their neighbours. We also provide lifts to hospital appointments for those unable to drive themselves.
- In Birdingbury one person is dedicated to contact the bereaved and others make follow-up informal visits. Caring relationships are evident.
- Frankton and Bourton are supportive communities where awareness of need is shared and phone calls and informal visits are made regularly.

## 10. Our Rector's home

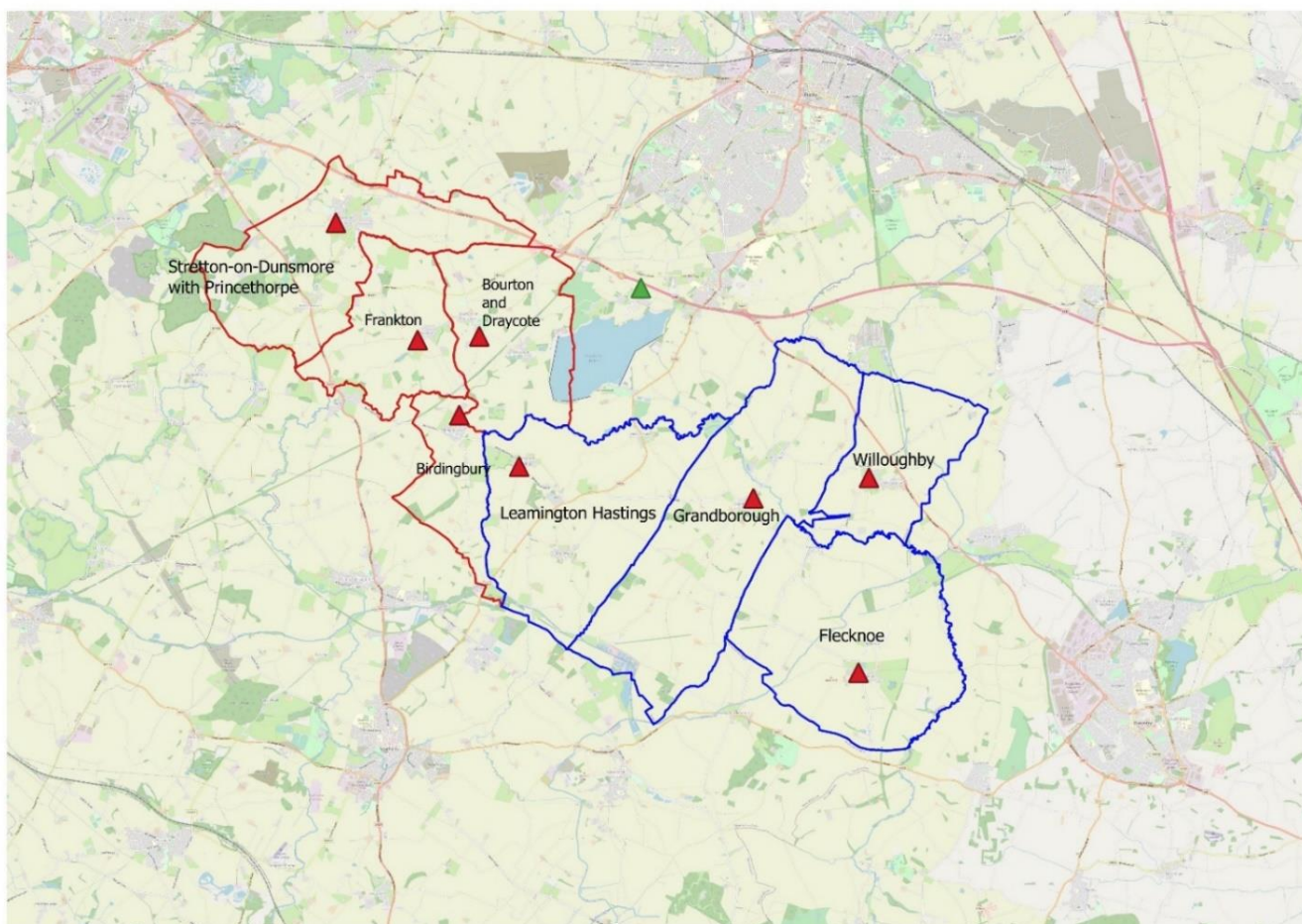
Our vicarage is a 1980s constructed, 4 bedroomed, detached house on Main St. in Thurlaston. It is on the boundary of the benefice and close to beautiful Draycote Water. It sits on a good plot with parking at the front for several cars. There are 4 reception rooms, 4 bedrooms, one en-suite, a family bathroom, kitchen, utility, front and rear gardens. It meets the Church Commissioners Green Guide in terms of size, position and security. A separate entrance to the study (with access to a



downstairs WC) enables church business to be conducted away from family areas.

## 11. Location of the Draycote and Leam Valley Parishes

The Draycote benefice is well located in the centre of England with excellent road and rail links. Coventry, Leamington Spa and Rugby are all within 15 minutes' drive and all have good rail links. As well as being a lovely part of Warwickshire the area has excellent access to the M1 and M6 motorways which make it easy to visit other parts of the country.



### Population data (from 2011 census)

When Ryton on Dunsmore parish, to the west of Stretton is added, the combined population will be near 6,000. Being close to Coventry, Ryton has many new home developments.

Parish of Ryton on Dunsmore	1813
<b>Draycote benefice</b>	
Birdingbury	362
Bourton on Dunsmore with Draycote	275
Frankton	351
Stretton on Dunsmore with Princethorpe	1535
<b>Total</b>	<b>2523</b>
<b>Leam Valley benefice</b>	
Flecknoe	210
Grandborough	424
Leamington Hastings	440
Willoughby	398
<b>Total</b>	<b>1472</b>



## 12. Keeping our churches running smoothly

### Administration

The benefice employs an Administrative Assistant who works two mornings a week from Knightlow Primary School. Plans are in hand for the construction of a dedicated office and meeting room on the site. This will be funded by Stretton parish's Princethorpe National School Foundation – a trust for Christian education, from the proceeds of the recent sale of a building at Princethorpe. Acknowledging the need to develop a more supportive and co-ordinated role, we have formed a Benefice Council and are exploring merging some PCC functions to share skills, create efficiencies of time and effort and improve communications.

### Communication

Good communication is a challenge in multi-parish ministry, and we recognise both its importance and our shortcomings, so are focusing on improvement. The benefice website [www.draycotegroup.org.uk](http://www.draycotegroup.org.uk) is managed by the administrator and we also regularly post on village social media sites. Parish magazines are produced by individual churches either monthly or bi-monthly. Our monthly notice sheet, produced by the Parish Office, is distributed via email and printed copies are also available in each church.

### Finance

The benefice meets the Parish Share commitments in full every year, including contributions to the Deanery Support Fund, in support of parishes who cannot fund their share. We have had self-supporting ministry for more than a decade, so our costs have been low. The change in how the parish share is calculated will result in an increase for which we are preparing. We work hard to ensure that all our financial commitments, particularly Diocesan fees, are paid regularly and promptly.

We are looking at different ways to encourage generosity in many forms in our communities. Each parish contributes to a benefice account which covers the running of the parish office and other benefice administrative costs on a 40% Stretton, 20% Birdingbury, Bourton and Frankton ratio. Full sets of accounts for the last three years are available on request.



### To sum up

We believe that God has blessed us all with individual gifts. We are eager for our stewardship of the benefice to develop through our commitment of our time and talents as well as our financial contributions. We recognise that change is inevitable in our parishes. The pandemic has accelerated the pace of change.

We hope and pray that a better future is before us. Leading a multi-parish benefice is not an easy prospect, but for the right person, the challenge will be rewarding both for them and for our communities. We hope that someone with the skills and passion to shape and implement our vision for growth will lead us towards a future in which rural ministry is thriving and all who serve are equipped, trained and empowered.