

1. Unique qualities of each parish

While we strive to work together as far as possible, each of our parishes has unique qualities and strengths as highlighted 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 create 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.

St Leonards Birdingbury

St Leonards' is a small rural church in a quiet community of roughly 350 with a church roll of 33. There are plenty of families presently. We have a number of people involved with the church in one form or another (leading lay services, leading prayers, giving readings, welcoming, serving refreshments, flower arranging and cleaning etc) but typical attendance at non festival services is around 12- 15 people. However, church attendance at the key festivals of Christmas and Easter, together with Remembrance Day, can increase to 80-100 people.



Whilst there has been a decline in numbers attending church on a regular basis, attendance at key festivals has increased. A challenge for the new incumbent will be to inspire those attending the festivals to want to become more involved in church life. The village is very supportive of the church.



Whilst regular attendance at church is small there are plenty of activities taking place to keep our church healthy and loved. We are a friendly, caring, inclusive and loving community who, through an active PCC and other volunteers, are blessed with a variety of skills and talents that people are willing to share to keep St Leonard's alive.

We enjoy varied forms of worship and are fortunate to have an organist who brings our worship alive with his music. We enjoy good teaching which enables us to apply God's word in our everyday lives. We believe that whilst there are many positives to life at St Leonard's we also have our challenges, especially with regards to engagement in acts of worship.

St Peter's, Bourton with Draycote

St Peter's dates back to the 13th century and serves the parish of Bourton on Dunsmore and Draycote. The church has an electoral role of 23. Regular attendance averages 9. Easter and Christmas services see a congregation of up to 25. The candlelit carol service has an attendance of around 100. A 'Church in the Hall' service is held each month in the Bourton, Draycote and Frankton Village hall. The Hall was rebuilt in the early years of this century and provides wonderful community facilities.



Bourton and Draycote Trust (the vicar being an ex-officio committee member) exists to provide the relief of need. In recent years this trust has supported a community lunch for residents in an effort to combat loneliness. This has been very successful. The parish has a strong farming background. Harvest is a popular service and in the past Rogation tide and Lammastide have been important events in our calendar. A high proportion of village children attend

Knightlow School, which represents a strong link between the church and the community. Many people in the village have an attachment to the church but do not attend services.

Community spirit in both villages is strong. However recent momentum in developing our mission has stalled and the progression of time is eroding our congregation faster than we have been able to strengthen it. The church building requires regular upkeep which is expensive and inevitably dominates fund raising efforts. We believe the Church is valued by the community but this is not reflected in attendance at services. We are keen to have an incumbent who will lead worship, develop lay-led worship and inspire faith in the community.

St. Nicholas, Frankton

The church has an electoral roll of 20 with a village population of 350, approximately 300 adults and 50 children. We are blessed with a number of young families a lot of whom attend Celebrate@4, an initiative begun six years ago to attract younger families and welcome all ages. We pride ourselves on being a friendly and welcoming team. Old and new attendees are greeted warmly, and contact is maintained with former members of the congregation who have moved away.



The PCC and congregation work well together offering help and expertise as necessary. At present the PCC has six members and we are currently recruiting a church warden.

Our lay-led family services are interactive, children are involved and the music is provided by our own organist. The Christingle service is a joyous celebration. The village support continues quietly in the background. People came together to make poppies and decorate the church for the centenary of the end of the first world war. One lady embroidered a stunning altar cloth which will be the centrepiece at Remembrance for many future years.



We want to develop the healing side of our ministry and on a spiritual level find ways to develop faith after baptisms, weddings and funerals. Our challenge could be to find ways to attract more people to attend after their significant special occasions.

All Saints, Stretton on Dunsmore with Princethorpe

Stretton is a busy village with a shop and Post Office, doctor's surgery, primary school and a pub. It is the largest and most socially diverse village in the benefice, with a range of social and private housing and a population numbering about 2,400. The parish includes the adjacent smaller village of Princethorpe which has a Roman Catholic church and primary school.



All Saints Church, built in 1837, is in a good state of repair and is well-equipped with a kitchen, toilet, children's area and prayer corner. The removal of some pews has created flexible spaces at the front and rear for church and social activities. Our eight-member PCC (including two church wardens)

works well together and we share the tasks associated with running an active parish. Our building is valued and well-used. There are 85 on our electoral roll and our regular attendance at services is between 18 and 30, but festivals attract larger numbers.

We have 3 or 4 weddings and a similar number of baptisms each year. A generous legacy enabled us to install an audio-visual system that means we can develop more creative lay-led worship. We have a small team able and willing to lead these services and we are eager to have a leader who will help us develop and improve our skills for leading worship.

Music plays an important part in our worship and we have an excellent organist and a festival choir who get together to rehearse for special services. Our new and enthusiastic team of bell ringers are ringing for services and weddings. Recognising that Sunday afternoons can be a difficult time for people living on their own, we have recently initiated a 'Communita' in the hour before our monthly evening worship. Stretton is blessed with many people with craft skills and our regular 'knit and natter' sessions at church have been created items such as our Remembrance poppies and knitted Christmas tree and as well as providing excellent fellowship.



These short updates from the Leam Valley parishes supplement the information in their 2018 profile, much of which is still current.

All Saints, Leamington Hastings

The health and growth of our church has not been measured by a NCD survey since January 2018, so we have no formal measure as to progress since then. However, we do know that, together with many other rural parishes, we have suffered a gradual decline in regular church attendance over the years with few if any younger members attending regularly. This has meant there are fewer people available to take on leadership roles in the church and the burden on those that do is higher than it should be and not sustainable in the longer run. We recognise that our missionary skills must be generally poor and there is a reluctance and/or lack of confidence amongst many believers to share our faith and joy of knowing Jesus with others. We want help and support to overcome this barrier.

In spite of the pandemic, there are bright sparks of light though to give us hope and encouragement. We formed a "Friends" group in the autumn of 2019 to help with fundraising for the fabric of the church, and have been greatly encouraged by the commitment of all those involved and enthusiasm towards the church and all it stands for. There have also been wonderful acts of kindness and support to one another in the parish throughout the last year. We have worked more closely together with other parishes in the benefice and are enthusiastic to seek out from within the area the IT and social media skills needed to follow Flecknoe in developing online or recorded offerings for worship and teaching. We continue to work with our Methodist friends and coordinate activities throughout the year. We work closely with the C of E primary school in Hill to share and nurture the Christian faith in our young people. Through our Readers we have been active in lay led worship and the handling of funeral services.

Our urgent priority is to build a team with the enthusiasm, fun and faith to take us to a position where we share with others the good news of Jesus and so bring others to faith. We would welcome more biblical teaching. We would like to work with an inspired full-time minister of faith with a talent for engaging with people of all ages. We also look forward to the help and encouragement from being part of a larger benefice with a broad span of skills and experience.

St Mark's, Flecknoe

Flecknoe is a Norse settlement and has been a village since about 900AD and contains several sites scheduled by English Heritage. At its peak in the 14th century the population of Flecknoe was about ten times its current size, before the ravages of the Black Death took its toll. At the eastern edge of the Coventry Diocese, it is one of the most sparsely populated rural parishes in the Diocese and includes the hamlets of Sawbridge, Nethercote and Wolfhampcote, as well as several farms.

Our Breakfast Service was designed by us five years ago to reach out to the community and now has an average attendance of about 25, including 7 children. 4 to 7 from the older generation attend the Holy Communion service. Encouragingly, the church roll rose from 7 in 2014 to 15 in 2017, as an outcome of the popularity of the Breakfast Service but has stagnated since. This provides a good basis for the future, but there is an urgent need for external leadership to build on this base to take us forward and grow spirituality in our community. During lock-down in place of our Breakfast Service we have been running a simple 25-minute pre-recorded on-line service on our web site and on Facebook which has attracted over 100 views per service.

St Peter's, Grandborough

Grandborough Church is located at the centre of the village. The present church dates from about the middle of the 14th century and the tower a little later.

The church has a monthly service pattern comprising Holy Communion, Welcome to Worship (a service designed for children) and Evensong, with the addition of a monthly Benefice service. The church's most popular service is Messy Church, which takes place monthly on a Thursday afternoon and is aimed at younger children. There is a Methodist Chapel in the village and some services are held jointly, in particular evensong in the winter, where the Methodist Chapel is warmer and therefore more welcoming.

The electoral roll for the parish is 13 individuals. The PCC for St Peter's comprises five individuals plus the Church Warden. The PCC meets around six times annually. The church buildings and churchyard are well maintained, with separate rotas for flowers and cleaning. In addition, there are annual volunteer days where more significant maintenance activities are undertaken. Currently there are two material building projects being progressed- repointing the south wall and replacing the flooring in the church tower.

Prior to the pandemic, the church hosted a monthly farmers market, which was very popular with the village and served as a useful source of income. It is to be hoped that when current conditions pass this can be revived. The key requirement for Grandborough is a priest who can help us on our spiritual and evangelical journey. There is a particular need to widen the church community.

St Nicholas, Willoughby

Willoughby is an ancient village and is referred to in the Domesday Book and one of the oldest buildings is the church. It is a small rural parish to the south east of Rugby located between Dunchurch and Daventry in the Leam Valley. The A45 runs through the east of the village as does the Grand Union canal. The majority of houses are situated on Main Street and Lower Street.

The average church attendance was 16 adults and 2 children, with larger numbers for festivals and special occasions. Each month the main services consist of: Family Service, and a Holy Communion Service. There are currently 30 on the Electoral Roll. We had a small choir who continued to inspire and lead our worship on Sundays. The Ladies Fellowship, previously Mothers ` Union, is a small group who met each month. There are 4 members of the PCC, a small group who work well together for the

benefit of St Nicholas. There is one Church Warden. There are about 5 meetings a year with additional ad hoc meetings for special events or work.

The chancel roof was replaced recently following damage and theft. The community all helped fund raise. There are restricted funds to put a toilet/servery in church at a cost of £27,000 for which a faculty is being sought. However, £130,000 is needed to repair the failing nave roof. A grant for £20,000 is promised but fundraising has had to stop due to COVID and also grant applications are waiting on the Faculty. The pandemic has had a significant influence on the fortunes of St Nicholas. The monthly soup and social loved by many had to stop and the fund raising which was so successful is unable to take place.