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HOLY TRINITY & ST PETER, ILFRACOMBE WITH ST PETER, BITTADON



PARISH PROFILE FOR A PROSPECTIVE TRAINING POST

General Information

The Parishes of Ilfracombe (Holy Trinity and St Peter's) and Bittadon, within the Ilfracombe Team Ministry in the Shirwell Deanery

The Benefice includes five parishes and six churches.

The Team Rector assumes responsibility for Holy Trinity and St Peter's in Ilfracombe and St Peter's Bittadon. The Rev'd Keith Wyer has PTO.

The Team Vicar, the Rev'd Preb. Giles King-Smith, assumes responsibility for the Parishes of Lee, Woolacombe and Morteohoe. He is presently assisted by the self-supporting priest, the Rev'd Ann Lewis.

The Coast and Combe Mission Community includes the Coast to Combe benefice (SS Philip and James, Ilfracombe, St Peter, Berrynarbor, St Peter ad Vincula, Combe Martin) under their Vicar, the Rev'd Peter Churcher.

Training Incumbent

The Rev'd John Roles – usually known as Father John or simply, John, and his wife Sheila.

The Vicarage, St Brannock's Road, Ilfracombe EX34 8EG – 01271 863350 – frjohnroles@gmail.com

Date of ordination: Deaconed 2012, Priested 2013

Length of time in present parish: 23 years as a layman, 4 years as self-supporting curate, 4 years as incumbent

Other responsibilities and duties currently undertaken by incumbent:

Foundation Governor at Ilfracombe CofE Junior School.

Chaplaincy Team member at Ilfracombe Academy

Chair of ICE Ilfracombe

Vocations Advisor

Independent Director of One Ilfracombe

Chaplain to Royal British Legion

1st Ilfracombe (Holy Trinity) Scouts ex-officio Committee member

Member of Compass Rotary Club

Previous posts and experience of incumbent, including details of experience with previous curates:

I have been in Ilfracombe for a long time! For twenty years I was teaching English at the Park School in Barnstaple (following 12 years of teaching in London). During this time I held a number of offices in the Parish, including Church Warden, and acted as a support for previous curates. My call to ministry has been very long-standing but the decision to take early retirement gave me the opportunity to seriously explore ordained ministry.

After a year at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, I returned to the parish as self-supporting curate. When my training incumbent left I was asked to cover the vacancy. Most unusually, I was allowed to apply for the post and was appointed after interview.

I "inherited" our stipendiary curate in the sixth month of his training and saw him through priesting and subsequent completion of his training requirements. He has recently been appointed to an incumbency in Chester Diocese. I have enjoyed having ordinands on both long and short placements; they have often come from a more evangelical tradition. All of us have found the experience to be rewarding!



Nature of post

We are offering a training post for a deacon who expects to be ordained priest. (the parish welcomes the ministry of female priests)

The experience will be mostly in the Parish of Holy Trinity and St Peter, Ilfracombe but will include opportunities within the Team Ministry (to include the parish of Bittadon, and the Coastal Parishes of Lee, Woolacombe and Morteohoe) and the Coast and Combe Mission Community (the Parishes of SS Philip and James, Ilfracombe, Bittadon and Combe Martin)

The context: the coastal town of Ilfracombe



Ilfracombe is a coastal market town nestling among breathtaking Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in North Devon. It is highly populated in the summer months by the many thousands of tourists who flock here to relax and enjoy our friendly hospitality. Damien Hirst's statue, *Verity*, stands 67 feet tall, overlooks the entrance to our beautiful, historic, harbour, depicting truth and justice.

Church in Ilfracombe is the informal term we use to describe our partnership in the Gospel. Recent appointments have made for a more open, encouraging and collaborative way of working together. "We live in exciting times!" is a phrase often heard at our joint meetings. Our population of approximately 12,000 is served by the Parish of Holy Trinity and St Peter, the Parish of St Philip and St James (Pip & Jim's), Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church, Encounter Church, Brookdale Evangelical Church, Emmanuel (Methodist/URC), Ilfracombe Baptist Church and the Salvation Army.

Ilfracombe has a strong, generous and volunteering community; there are two Rotary Clubs, Round Table, Lions Club, and many uniformed groups; St John Ambulance, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Sea Scouts, Army Cadets.

Ilfracombe is a good place to live. We have a long High Street, home of many good quality independent retailers as well as national chains.

The Embassy Cinema sits on the High Street, and the Landmark Theatre is located along the seafront, both offering a wide variety of productions.

Ilfracombe has gained a reputation for the quality of its restaurants (including Thomas Carr's Michelin starred *Olive Room*) and for its galleries and artistic community.

Water sports are on offer in the town as well as at the nearby surfing beaches of Wollacombe and Croyde. We have an award-winning Gig Club and, for those who prefer dry land, there are miles of scenic walks. Nearby are horse riding stables and we have four golf courses within 10 miles. Our tennis club members frequently come out tops in local tournaments, as does our rugby club. The swimming pool has recently been upgraded to provide a competition size pool, and the complex houses a fitness studio.

Check out www.visitilfracombe.co.uk for a wealth of information on the local area and activities available.

As with many towns we have an ageing population, but with super-fast broadband and the opportunity for micro businesses to flourish from home, many young families are taking advantage of low house prices and the improved quality of life to settle here. Work on the southern extension of 750 new homes is expected to begin soon, and will, hopefully, attract more young people.

Education

Our young people are served by an Infant and Nursery School; a C of E Junior School situated adjacent to St Peter's Church; and a C of E Academy, a short walk from St Peter's. Close links are maintained with the C of E Junior School with clergy on the governing board. Weekly assemblies are led by the clergy in the school, and the churches are used by the clergy to provide a base in support of the children's religious education.

All three schools have been recognised as Good in their recent Ofsted inspections. Their own websites give further information.

The Academy has evolved an interesting model for **Chaplaincy** which is supported by all of Ilfracombe's churches, who also provide assemblies at the Junior and Infant schools.

ICE Ilfracombe is a charity founded by the two Anglican parishes to provide a Christian youth worker at the Academy. Trustees are drawn from a range of local churches and there are plans to expand the remit to include an after-school café for students of the Academy in the High Street. This is in conjunction with Encounter Church.

Behind the scenes

Ilfracombe became very popular among the Victorians as a holiday resort, and much of its architecture reflects this period. However, many of the large Victorian houses have been turned into flats, some of which provide poor accommodation and contribute towards health and social problems, reflecting in a high listing on the area of deprivation scale.

These issues are keenly being addressed by our Town, District and County Councils, and by **One Ilfracombe**, an organisation set up by the Town Council following its successful bid to take place in a pilot scheme to redesign the way services are delivered locally in order to achieve better

outcomes for the people who use and pay for them. Ilfracombe operates a 'bottom up' philosophy, and our ground-breaking One Ilfracombe is seen both at Government and national level as the model to follow. See <http://www.oneilfracombe.org.uk/about-us/> for further information.

Ilfracombe Food Bank now operates under the auspices of the Trussell Trust but was established many years ago. It is supported by members of local churches and operates from the Salvation Army building. The Rev'd Ann Lewis (SSM based in the Coastal Parishes) currently leads the team.

Belle's Place offers a café environment for the support of the vulnerable, and **Open Church** (run from the Baptist Church and supported by all churches) provides a place for refreshments and company once a week. **ReGen** (based at Encounter Church) offers support for the elderly.

Employment

As a coastal resort, Ilfracombe relies heavily on tourism, and many jobs in that industry are low paid and seasonal, leading to increased levels of unemployment in the winter months. We have a busy fishing industry operating out of our historic working harbour.



The international headquarters of TDK Lambda is found in Ilfracombe, and the Pall (Europe) factory is a leading production member of the international firm. Both manufacturers provide valuable, well paid, and many highly skilled jobs.

We have many care workers employed in the numerous **residential homes**, providing care for the vulnerable and needy. Clergy make regular visits to these homes and Holy Trinity and St Peter's act as emergency evacuation centres for the majority of them

Ilfracombe is a very safe town with a low crime rate.

Travel by road to Ilfracombe across the beautiful Exmoor National Park or by the North Devon Link Road. The A361 leaves Junction 27 on the M5 for a spectacular journey over the hills to Barnstaple, and onwards to Ilfracombe. Rail links are by Tiverton Parkway with a direct line to London, and from Barnstaple to Exeter. The nearest airports are Bristol and Exeter.

The Churches



Holy Trinity is the ancient Parish Church of Ilfracombe. Its longest serving Nineteenth Century Vicar (50 years) was associated with members of the Oxford Movement and encouraged an emphasis on the sacraments and on public service; this continues in more modern format.

The congregation is largely elderly and numbers have been reduced by death and the moving away to be near relatives. However, there are signs of new growth, particularly in a resurgence of the robed choir under a new Director of Music.

Hospitality and welcome have been given more importance in recent years and there has been a distinct enlivening and sense of fellowship. Older members are valued, new members are encouraged.



Life in the **Choir** has been revitalised by the appointment of a new Director of Music. Our invitation to others to join our **Augmented Choir** on major occasions has been successful and in 2019 we re-introduced Choral Evensong on the fifth Sunday and sang the Faure *Requiem* liturgically for All Souls.

Sunday Services:

8.00 am Said Eucharist (traditional language)

9.15 am Sung Eucharist with robed choir followed by refreshments

5th Sunday 6.30 pm Choral Evensong

Weekday:

Wednesday 10.00 am Said Eucharist

St Peter's, founded as a daughter church in the late nineteenth century, has always had an Anglo-Catholic tradition. Common Worship is used but accompanied by bells and smells.



The congregation is more mixed than at Holy Trinity and St Peter's has always enjoyed a reputation for its welcome and inclusiveness. Its proximity to Ilfracombe Junior School and the openness of the building (it was never given fixed pews!) make it an ideal resource for the School and we are presently seeking to make access easier. We also hold larger events here including an annual Barn Dance and Burns' Night Supper. In the past we have hosted concerts (everything from rock to oratorio) and theatre.



The Annual Barn Dance in St Peter's



Adapting the space for Maundy Thursday

Sunday Services:

11.00 am Sung Mass (preceded on the 1st Sunday by Breakfast)

7.00 pm 3rd Sunday *Alternate* - 30 minutes of quite worship in either Celtic or Taize style organised and led by the laity.

Weekday:

Thursday 9.00 am Said Mass

Saturday 9.00 am Said Mass

Two churches serving one parish and all of God's people

The churches share one PCC and recent tradition sees the appointment of one of the Wardens from each church. Finances are linked and shared.

Both churches have a long-standing tradition of being open for private prayer each day. Morning Prayer is said daily, alternating between the two churches. All three of our buildings are licenced.

The churches join together for each other's Patronal Festivals; Christmas, Holy Week and Easter services are shared. Civic services are usually held at Holy Trinity, known locally as "the Parish".

In addition to the services mentioned above, **Beer and Hymns** held at *the George and Dragon*, in Fore Street on the second Sunday of the month and **Spirit Level** (an informal discussion group) on the third Sunday.

Preaching is important and needs to be well prepared. An exploration of the Gospel is the usual focus. As well as a Reader in Training, other laity are given the opportunity to preach.

Two **House Groups** began meeting last year and there is a monthly **Julian Prayer Group** meeting at Holy Trinity. A monthly **Community Lunch** raises funds for local causes and, at present, is supporting ICE Ilfracombe.

The Way Forward is a document produced during my own curacy in the parish in response to the need to reassess our buildings. We were called to re-imagine the use of our three principle buildings; two large churches of historic and architectural interest and Trinity Rooms (effectively our church hall).

The first question was “how can we make these places accessible and fit for the purpose of serving the whole community of Ilfracombe.

Since then, Trinity Rooms have been completely refurbished to provide two well equipped spaces (with kitchens) for a variety of church and community needs; our tagline, **Making Room for the Community**.



A function in Trinity Rooms

St Peter’s was leaking like a sieve but, with its location next to the Junior School and in the most densely populated residential area of the town, we wished to make it **A Heart for the Community**. With its large



St Peter’s used for public examination 2018

and adaptable space, and a new roof (costing £470,000) it has been used for a whole variety of meetings and performances, and even for the mock and public exams for Ilfracombe Academy.



Music is important at the Junior School. Here, Taiko drumming at a celebration

Phase Two will give us improved access for all, new toilets and reopen a physical link between the church and the junior school, allow easy and safe access for assemblies, performances and teaching sessions.

Holy Trinity is the ancient Parish Church, still better known as **“The Parish”**. It holds much of the town’s history and still has a civic roll. The Remembrance Day Commemorations are held at Holy Trinity and, in 2019 for the first time, all Ilfracombe churches were represented at the War Memorial and took part in the Service which followed.



Fr John Blesses the Town at the Lighting of the Lights, the beginning of the Combe Christmas Weekend

In 2019 we completed a project to restore the East End and we are currently working on Phase 2 which will restore the Nave, Aisles and Tower. Estimates for this are in excess of £800,000 and progress has been hampered by the Coronavirus crisis.

Holy Trinity is used for concerts (the Mediaeval Babes in 2019) and, until recently, hosted the local square dancers. We have a team of **bell ringers** who ring each Sunday and for weddings.

The Holy Trinity Graveyard Group is a volunteer team who have transformed the large and neglected area (containing some 2,500 monuments), making it a popular local amenity. There are occasional performances by the local theatre group **Studio Theatre**, who in *Dead Famous* bring alive the dormant residents to tell their own stories.



A scene from the 2019 *Dead Famous* in the Churchyard

The **Electoral Roll** is currently 108

Occasional Offices



Wedding numbers average seven. We offer a Wedding Preparation Day in conjunction with the Mission Community

Baptisms numbered 8 in 2019. We encourage Baptism during the Eucharist but we are flexible in having it at other times.

Funerals (22 in 2019) are held at either church. Cremations occur in Barnstaple often after a church service. Burials are usually at the Marlborough Road Cemetery, Holy Trinity graveyard is closed for burials; at Bittadon burials take place in the churchyard.

St Peter, Bittadon



Bittadon is a tiny parish: 1000 acres, 45 residents, 14 homes and the church, which is the only community building. The **Electoral Roll** is nine; a surprisingly high proportion of the population for those who like statistics!

There is a monthly service of Holy Communion and additional services for a Gift Day, Harvest Festival (followed by a splendid Harvest Supper) and a Christmas celebration.

Every second year, a Nativity in the Barn is held at one of the farms and involves the children and animals of local families.

Bittadon is a community with a rich local heritage and they are to be admired for keeping the church open, welcoming and alive.



Nativity in the Barn 2019

People

We pride ourselves on our joy! Here is a small selection of our smiley people!



Lynda Courtnadge
Warden and Treasurer



Theresa Powell
Acting Warden and Reader in Training



Sue Jerrard
Warden at Bittadon



Jenni Coats
Lay worship and Groups Leader



Reg Spurway
Verger



Dominic Carter
Director of Music



Janine Whapham
Parish Administrator



Chris Howard
Chair of Grants Group

The key to our life is the team rather than the individual. We are fortunate in having a parish which builds on the talents we have.

The PCC has subcommittees for Finance, Grants, Entertainment and Fabric each chaired by someone other than the incumbent! Our last curate chaired the Entertainments Group. These groups meet regularly and provide written reports before PCC meetings. This makes for shorter, more efficient meetings.

There are things we need to develop and build on, among them:

- *Messy Church* was a successful ecumenical venture for some years but lost its mo-jo. There have been calls from non-church members to restart it
- Communications: we have a Facebook page but are only just developing a website
- Realistic giving
- A pastoral visiting group
- Outreach to families and young people

Vision and Priorities

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” John 10:10

Our churches are open and welcoming places

- Our welcome is Christ’s welcome and, as such, is inclusive and offered to people of all backgrounds regardless of status, age, ethnicity, colour, experience, gender or sexuality
- Friendship and companionship are on offer
- We encourage all to use their talents to build our community
- We laugh together; we can also cry together
- We pray
- We worship in largely traditional ways in a confident, relaxed (but never casual!) manner
- We are open to new ideas

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me” Matthew 25:45

We work together with others to be a serving church

- Our brothers and sisters in other church groups are important to us. We speak informally of “Church in Ilfracombe”; rejoicing in what unites us and celebrating our diversity. Ministers of all churches meet regularly
- We join in with the initiatives of others and encourage joint ventures
- We are working towards making our buildings fit for service to the community

As a Mission Community

- We pray together. Ministers and laity meet for Morning prayer once a week in each of our nine churches in rotation

- We support each other through friendship and the regular meeting of ministers
- We have a joint monthly magazine, *Coast and Combe*
- We run a Marriage Preparation Course, Confirmation, and study courses together
- Last year the Ilfracombe parishes ran Alpha together
- Holy Trinity's augmented choir is regularly enhanced by members of other churches

How does the incumbent understand the role of training?

I see curacy as a most exciting opportunity!

It's an opportunity for the curate to explore ministry, to challenge and to be challenged within a safe environment.

It's an opportunity for the training incumbent to learn as well as teach.

It's an opportunity for the parish to encourage and benefit from someone coming for a different place with different experiences.

I believe it is my role to encourage, challenge and support. Trust, friendship and a shared vision are keys to success. Prayer underpins all things.

Hospitality is of great importance to my wife, Sheila, and I and our home is a place of welcome and support; a place where food, wine, laughter and tears can be shared in comfort and confidence.

In addition to regular supervision meetings, I would encourage the curate to establish a support group within our community to advise and to encourage and to have fun with.

It is my vision that every person is encouraged and enabled to be the best of which God has called them to be so that they might serve Christ and build His Kingdom in Ilfracombe in this rich community.

What is the likely role of the curate in future plans? Areas of particular responsibility for curate in training:

Curacy is a time for growth. In my own curacy here, I was challenged and grew, constantly aware of God's presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making new steps forward.

In Ilfracombe there are many possibilities and opportunities which can be suited to the particular interests and areas of expertise of the curate; among them:

- Work in any of the schools, including chaplaincy, delivering collective worship, governorship, working with the ICE Ilfracombe youth worker
- Working ecumenically and encouraging the growth of the serving Church in Ilfracombe
- Involvement with the Foodbank and other initiatives which serve the whole community
- Gaining experience in leadership through sub-committees and possibly chairing one of them
- Encouraging prayer and study in developing newly-formed house groups
- Gaining experience from our extensive building programme; being involved in fund-raising and grant applications
- Understanding liturgy with the opportunity of developing new aspects of worship, working with the incumbent and lay leaders
- Working with others to form a pastoral visiting team
- Working with and supporting the Mission Community ministry team

Accommodation



St Peter's House sits next to the Church. Built in the arts and crafts style in the 1920s, it is an elegant house with four bedrooms, dining room, sitting room, a study and large kitchen. The house and garden have views of the Tors and the Bristol Channel. Parking is available at the church and the house is approached by a steep pathway.



Contact for more information:

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