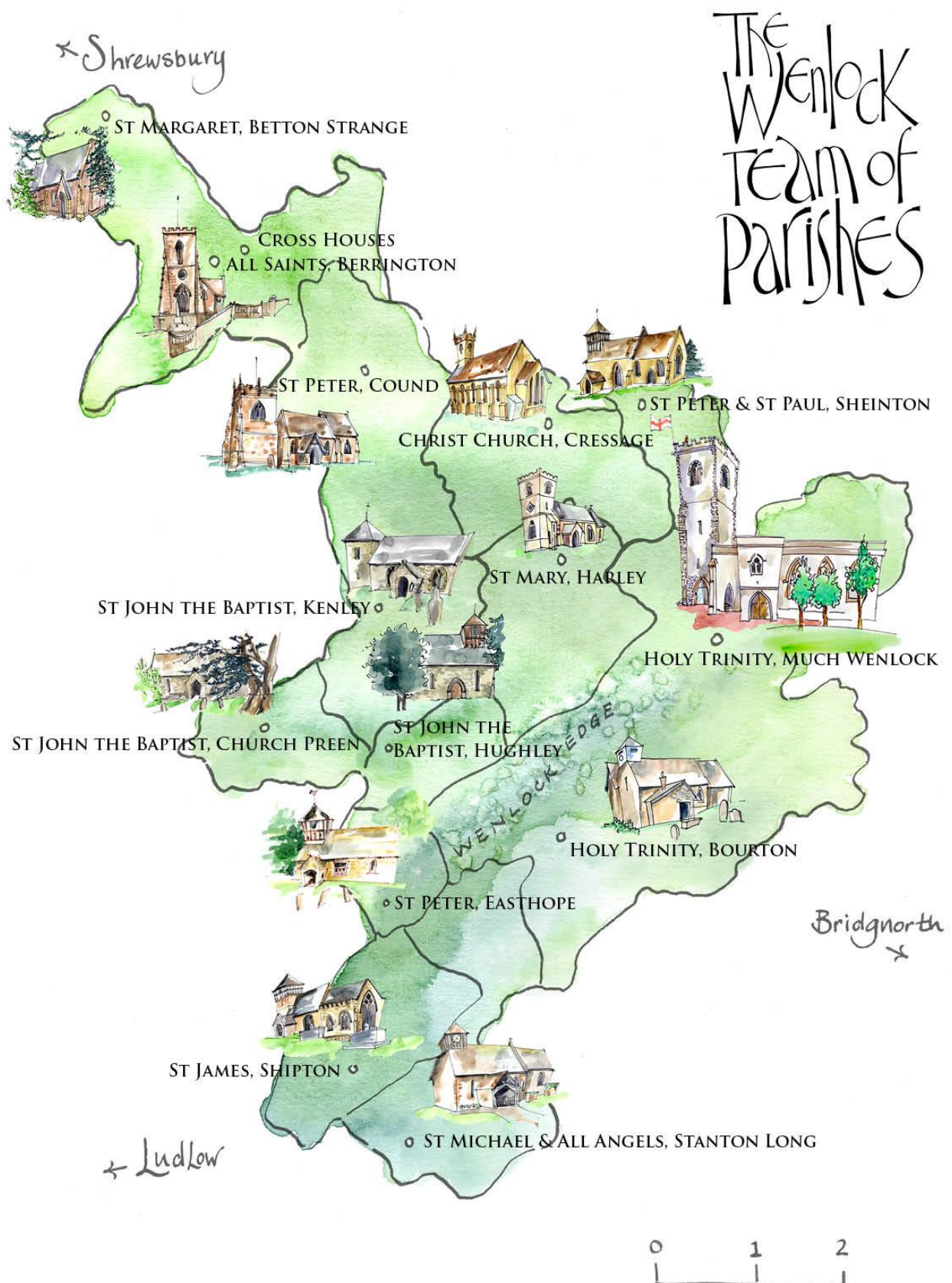


THE Wenlock TEAM of Parishes

Team Profile For Prospective Curates 2023

www.wenlockchurches.co.uk

www.muchwenlockchurch.co.uk



Wenlock Team of Parishes is the working title of the legally defined Wenlock Team Ministry, constituted as a single benefice, with 12 parishes and the district of Bourton, and served by one full-time stipendiary priest and supported by the Rector of the Apedale Parish as part of the Deanery Group Ministry. As a Deanery we wish to demonstrate exemplary practice when it comes to the delivery of the Group Ministry. The Team also has two Retired Priests, as well as access to Priests from across the Deanery as and when required, a Team Reader, Leaders of Worship, and an Encircled in Care Dementia Friendly Care Group.

There are two websites: muchwenlockchurch.co.uk & wenlockchurches.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

The Wenlock Team of Parishes is in the Condover Deanery, in the Archdeaconry of Ludlow in the diocese of Hereford. It is a rural team, with Shrewsbury the county town of Shropshire to the north and Telford to the north-east.

It is a productive agricultural area with many small independent businesses throughout the team. The main centres for employment are Telford and Shrewsbury, while some people commute to Wolverhampton, Birmingham and further afield.

There are good transport links via the M54, the A5 and A49 to the benefice. There are also train services at Church Stretton, Shrewsbury and Telford.

Whilst some families have lived in the benefice for generations, other families wishing to live in this part of the beautiful Shropshire countryside have enriched our communities and churches.

TEAM RECTOR/TRAINING INCUMBENT



**The Revd Matthew Stafford The Rectory, New Road,
Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6EQ**

Tel: 01952 727396 Email: wenlockrectory@btinternet.com

The Revd Matthew Stafford was Inducted and Licensed as Team Rector in March 2015. Matthew trained for the Ordained Ministry at Ripon College Cuddesdon and prior to Ordination spent 3 years at the Church Army, Wilson Carlisle College of Evangelism in Sheffield.

Matthew was Ordained Deacon in 1999 and Ordained Priest in 2000, his title Parish being St Anne and St Peter's (UPA)

High Wycombe in the Diocese of Oxford. Following his Curacy Matthew spent twelve and a half years as Rector of the United Benefice of Holy Trinity Oakengates and Wrockwardine Wood, Telford in the Diocese of Lichfield.

Matthew has a strong pastoral approach to mission, ministry and evangelism and would be the first to say that 'he takes God seriously, but himself not too seriously!' Matthew featured in the BBC Documentary 'A Vicar's Life' in 2018 and the programme won the TV Times Religious Programmes Award in 2019.

For many years Matthew has been part of the vocations network in his previous Diocese as well as now being actively involved with the Vocations Network in the Diocese of Hereford and very committed to fostering vocations whether lay or ordained. Matthew is also a member of the Diocesan Deliverance Ministry Group. In 2019 Matthew successfully completed the Germinate Rural Leaders Course through the Arthur Rank Centre.

Matthew has the privilege of training two curates and has fostered people's vocations to Church Army and other Licensed Lay and Ordained Ministries.

Matthew is using the very best of the monastic tradition of Wenlock as a springboard for mission and integrating the monastic principles of Worship, Prayer, Study, Work, Hospitality and Spiritual Renewal into every area of Parish Life. In 2021 and in memory of his sister Catherine who died of Cholangiocarcinoma during lockdown, Matthew wrote a book entitled the Sacrum Obumbratio - A Pilgrim's Spiritual Companion to the Sacred Shadows of Wenlock Priory.

In the Autumn of 2022 Matthew is to be made a Prebendary and Member of the College of Canons at Hereford Cathedral in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the life of the parish, benefice and the wider diocese.

Following the departure of the Team Vicar in 2019, a strategic view of the Team and the Deanery took place. As a result, the decision was made not to reappoint a Team Vicar. Instead, a Deanery Group Ministry was pursued and in the Autumn of 2021 the Deanery became a recognised Group Ministry.

The Parishes and Benefices retain their unique identity and still have an Incumbent that they look to, but it is now possible for Stipendiary Clergy to mutually support one another across Parish boundaries more easily. A direct advantage of this for the Wenlock and Apedale Benefices is that we are working across Parish boundaries and the Rector of Apedale is especially supporting School's Ministry in Cressage.

OUR AREA

The magnificent Wenlock Edge – a limestone escarpment which gives its name to a geological period runs through the team. To the north of the Edge is the Shropshire plain. To the west the imposing Stretton Hills including the Long Mynd, to the south the Corvedale and the Clee Hills lie in the distance.

Much Wenlock is an historic market town with many tourists visiting the ruined Priory and Cluniac Monastery of St Milburga. More recently, Much Wenlock has risen to prominence as the birthplace of the modern Olympic movement inspired by Dr William Penny Brookes. Ironbridge, the home of the Industrial Revolution, is only 6 miles from the town.

HERE AND NOW

There are many highlights within the area of our team. The team is an orchestra of talent and enthusiasm, which requires a Curate who will immerse themselves into rural ministry and help the parishes to realise their full potential.

Lay ministry is developing, including locally led services. Many people are fully aware of the pressures on clergy and understand they need to take up their responsibilities and work collaboratively with clergy and the clergy with them. Equally, the rural model of church still persists. Balancing the two is important and lockdown certainly helped the Parishes to realise that that being part of Group Ministry was in fact a blessing.

The coming together of some parishes to share services is becoming more comfortable, especially in the light of Covid. A revelation has taken place across the team that as congregations they must graciously accept a necessary freedom of movement when it comes to attending worship, even though it may be difficult for those who have a strong allegiance to their own church.

There is an increase in the number of people attending church, in particular: Much Wenlock with younger people joining the choir, Trinity Trebles; Godly Play at Brockton and Harley with their Breakfast service and other special services. Sadly, Messy Church has had to be suspended at Cressage due to the Pandemic and the change in circumstances of its leadership.



Godly Play,
Brockton CofE School



Platinum Jubilee Beacon Event
Wenlock Priory



Milburga Pie
Blessing

There are a variety of services conducted throughout the team from a wide range of Anglican traditions and there is still scope for further development when it comes to celebrating the rich spiritual diversity of the Anglican tradition. There is a desire for the scriptures to be explained in an easily understood manner and for guidance on how people can make them applicable to their daily lives, enabling them to grow individually and collectively.

Much Wenlock Church Choir is planning to extend its outreach and also offer resources for services in the village churches, the local schools and reinstate Trinity Trebles in the Autumn of 2022.

The majority of our church buildings are in good order, with no major ongoing work required at present, with the exception of roof repairs to one church. Most are open 24/7 all year round, which is quite different to an urban environment, whilst others are only locked at night or during the winter months.

The Rector inherited excellent administrative structures for the whole Team from his predecessor, which has meant that over the last seven years he has been able to focus on mission, ministry and the closure process of Cressage, Berrington and Betton Strange.

Much Wenlock also benefits from the formation of the Ecclesiastical Charity, which encompasses the majority of the former small church charities and bequests.

Overall, our churches have fared well over the Pandemic and have a renewed focus and purpose. The majority have a reasonably optimistic outlook for the future and wish to be enabled to reach out more effectively, whilst others need extra encouragement to realise the considerable opportunities they have.

Berrington and Betton Strange along with Cressage have demonstrated a spiritually mature approach to the closure process of their churches, but with a commitment from the wider Team to go about mission and ministry in a different kind of way. The communities where churches are closing know that the wider Team has not abandoned them, and the occasional offices still take in neighbouring Parishes if need be.

Current Issues

Whilst Much Wenlock is a growing community, there is concern in many of the rural parishes about the numbers of people attending church and the increasing age of those who do.

Although the majority of the churches in the team have met their Parish Offer commitments, the ability to meet increased costs is still a cause for concern, especially as Berrington & Betton Strange and Cressage no longer financially contribute.

The natural geography of our team gives rise to concerns about communication and support across the whole team along with the Deanery as a whole which has impacted on staffing levels over the past 3 years. The Wenlock Group of Parishes now only has one stipendiary post when at one time there were two Team Vicars. However, now that we are a Group Ministry across the Deanery, we are able to access support from neighbouring Benefices, Apedale in particular.

There is a desire to raise the profile of our churches locally and the Team Rector has worked tirelessly over the past 7 years to maximise and promote our long Christian History and the mutual associations with the Priory with so many of the churches of the Team. The Parish Church of Much Wenlock exists to serve the whole town whether members of the community attend regularly or not. The community of Much Wenlock appreciates the Parish Church being in the heart of the town and that it is open 365 days of the year. The vocation of the worshipping community is to celebrate, foster and affirm the gifts of talents of everyone in the town and complement one another wherever possible.

THE FUTURE

As we look ahead, we feel the future life and work of our team relies on continued growth, cohesion, collaboration and mutual support that lockdown has helped to forge between the Parishes, especially in the success of Much Wenlock Mutual Aid, Online Worship and Bible Studies.

Mission Priorities

Over the years we have embedded Mission into our Ministry and Ministry into our Mission.

As an ancient Monastic Foundation, we are reclaiming and re-introducing the following Monastic Principles into our Mission and Ministry, in the knowledge that it was St Milburga who was passionate about pastoral care, evangelisation and due care for the environment.

Prayer – Build yourself a cell in your heart and retire there to pray. Catherine of Siena

Example: Week of Accompanied Prayer, Prayer Board & Prayer Cards.

Work - St Benedict reminds us that we believe that God is present everywhere; so when we work, we are working with God and for God.

Example: Caring for God's Acre, Environmental Group and supporting those in their professional lives in order to live up to the call to be salt and light in the workplace.

Study – Make me know your ways, O Lord; lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Psalm 25.4-5

Example: Bible Study Group, Book Reviews & Season Courses.

Hospitality – Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13.2

Example: Coffee Mornings, Ploughman's Lunch, Refreshments after Church, Parish Lunches & Encircled in Care.

Religious Renewal – 'This community lives in the covenant with God and is made up of a people who journey through the history of this world with the mission of embracing the whole of humanity. Just as God takes this process seriously and patiently waits for history to unfold, so God invites Christians to profound acceptance of their humanity, to commit themselves fully to history, not to fear secularism, and to dedicate themselves fully to solidarity, hospitality, and dialogue.' Luigi Gioia OSB

Example: We take the Cure of Souls seriously and have a strong sense of calling to meet the spiritual needs of people regardless of where they are on their journey of faith. We are celebrating the monastic tradition of Wenlock as well as integrating this afresh into our worshipping and community life.

As a Team we also hold steadfast to these particular words by Bert Ghezzi:

'Spiritual awakening emerges neither from clever programmes or detailed strategies: it comes one heart at a time. Second God sometimes chooses to bring spiritual replenishment to millions through one person's life of faith.'

None of the saints set out to found religious communities. None had planned to spawn renewals or to reform the church. Their aims were more personal. They simply wanted to love God above anything else- a goal we would be wise to make our own.

I'm smart enough to know that all the hard work in the world won't "earn" me God's touch. If the Holy Spirit is going to strike, I want to be ready on target. Prayer, study and the like can put me right on the bullseye.' Mystics & Miracles True Stories of Lives Touched by God

Collaborative Ministry

All the PCC's in the benefice have two representatives who serve on the Team Council. The Team Council meets twice a year and deals with Team Expenses, Safeguarding and importantly mutual support, fostering being part of something bigger than simply the individual parishes they represent.

The Team Rector is chairman, assisted by a lay co-chair, secretary, and team administrator. The team administrator deals with all fees for funerals and weddings, and payments for clergy expenses.

The Team is very fortunate to be served by two faithful retired priests, as well as priests from across the Deanery. The Licensed Reader also serves the Methodist Church as a local preacher.

The Leaders of Worship course run by the Reader has led to twenty adults undergoing training in leading locally led services.

Whilst there are some people living in the area who choose to attend churches in Shrewsbury and Telford offering alternative styles of worship, Much Wenlock also attracts worshippers from neighbouring towns such as Broseley, Church Stretton, Wellington, Newport and Shifnal who appreciate the Anglican choral tradition and the style of service offered there.

Resources

The most important resource we have is us – the parishioners. We have gifts of time and talents, and we will welcome the energy and enthusiasm of new and inspired leadership.

We have three parish publications covering the team: The Wenlock Herald, Village Life and Berrington Village Pump.

We have many special events in Much Wenlock: in particular the Olympian Games, Wenlock Arts Festival, Wenlock Word on the Edge Festival (story telling) and a very popular Christmas Fair.

There are village halls of various sizes at Shipton, Cressage, Cound, Berrington, Cross Houses, Harley, Church Preen and Kenley. Much Wenlock is served by the Priory Hall.

All our churches are currently involved in charitable giving, some more so than others depending on the particular circumstances

Administrative Support

The Team Administrator (Anne Belshaw) is currently available on an hourly basis, as and when required and is a huge support to the Team Rector and the Team at large.





Procession with the Blessed Sacrament following lockdown



Week of Accompanied Prayer



St Milburga Pie Blessing



Mayflower Service Shipton



Palm Sunday Procession



Cound Harvest and Scarecrow Festival

THE CURACY

The Training Post is for a deacon who expects to be ordained priest. We warmly welcome applications from ordinands regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or marital status.

Our Curate

The person we seek to appoint will:

- be encouraged to immerse themselves into rural ministry and creatively engage with all the churches across the team on a pastoral, sacramental, scriptural, liturgical, community and evangelistic level.
- make every effort to ensure that the Gospel is made relevant regardless of where individuals or groups are on their journey of faith.
- be bold in their missionary outlook as well as strategic planning and prepared to take risks.
- demonstrate a commitment, particularly to evangelism, through the occasional offices.
- work collaboratively with other clergy, readers and leaders of worship serving the team.
- help to identify, support, and develop diverse ministries with all ages of people.
- initiate a piece of work where the curate has a special interest or area of expertise.
- engage and relate to children and young people through our strong connections with our local schools as well as maximising the evangelistic potential of the liturgical year.
- collaborate with the Team Rector and fellow colleagues to engage with the children and staff at the William Brookes School (ages 11-18), Brockton and Cressage CE Primary Schools and the County Primary Schools at Church Preen and Much Wenlock.
- visit those needing pastoral care while expanding the involvement of the lay ministry personnel
- participate in local community events thus raising the profile of the clergy and church.
- work with PCCs to help them meet their responsibilities and where possible encourage joint meetings and closer working relationships
- be a team player who can focus on the positives in any situation and, if need be, work towards a solution or resolution at every opportunity
- take God and human relationships seriously but themselves not too seriously.

In return we as a Team offer love, support and friendship, as well as the assurance that ultimately the curate is here to be trained not necessarily 'do.' The Team Rector is totally committed to continuing ministerial development and will support, as well as encourage the prospective curate to fulfil all the Ministry Division and Hereford Diocese requirements. Above all, we want our Curate to enjoy their time with us, as a Curacy is the foundation for the rest of their ministry. We have a genuine desire for our Curate to be happy in the midst of the challenges and chances of ministry. The Training Incumbent especially desires that the Curate spiritually connect with the long Christian history of Wenlock and grasp that essentially ministry is about 'loving service' and the importance of solid ministerial formation.

PROVISION FOR THE POST HOLDER

Clergy Housing – 3 Park Road, Much Wenlock TF13 6JH

A 4 Bedroom House is available on a spacious estate in the Historic Town of Much Wenlock that far exceeds the Church Commissioners Guidance on the standard of clergy housing. The house has a separate study (in two sections), family bathroom and open-plan kitchen, utility room and downstairs toilet.



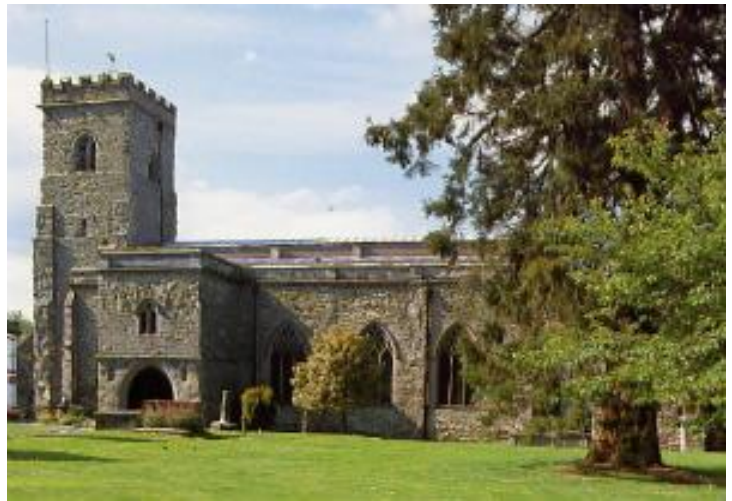
THE PARISHES

Much Wenlock

The Parish Church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity and is a place made sacred by lives and prayers for over 1300 years.

Our church family is made up of people who in some cases have spent most or all of their lives within the town and community of Much Wenlock and those who have been welcomed into our community over recent years. This includes a number of young families who

particularly value our commitment to children and the choral tradition. The Parish Church believes passionately care about inclusivity and the worshipping community of Holy Trinity is open to all regardless of where they are on their journey of faith. We seek to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed making known the presence of Christ through:



Welcome

- Which recognizes in all the very presence of Christ
- Reflects Christ as we strive to be a community of love and fellowship
- Reaches out to all irrespective of race, gender, sexuality or creed

Witness

- Which nurtures a relationship with the people of our parish
- Serves the local community through love, fellowship, teaching and hospitality.
- Gives glory to God

Worship

- Which is both sacramental and scriptural
- Values our Christian heritage
- Seeks to be inclusive and relevant to all
- Empowers us to a life of holiness and makes us alive to serve God in the world.

Our Community

Much Wenlock is a small historic market town with a vibrant community. The population of around 3,000 live largely in owner occupied property along with rented and social housing. Social difficulties, especially relating to employment for younger people and lack of affordable housing, are concerns covered in the Neighbourhood Plan and currently under review, with a predicted further 100 dwellings being built over the next twenty years. We have a primary school rated good by Ofsted and the William Brookes Academy, which serves the town and beyond. We are fortunate to be served by a medical practice and dentist, two care homes and a variety of independent shops and services. The town is also served by a Town Council and Mayor. Other local facilities include the Edge Arts Centre, swimming pool, library and bus services. The town hosts its own annual Olympian games and, every other year, Much Wenlock Festival as well as Word on the Edge (Story Telling Festival).



Bible Study Group



Church Choir



Crib Service (Pre-Covid)

Here and Now

Electoral Roll currently stands at 125.

Parish Offer £60,000 paid in full in addition to what the Parishes pay in the region of £30,000. Average Sunday Attendance at Much Wenlock (impacted by Covid) in the region of 75 adults and 9 children.

Records show overall growth in our congregation over the past 7 years which is drawn from a variety of church traditions.

Parish Giving – Quarterly retiring collections for chosen charities, collections at services, such as Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Services, are given or shared with charitable organisations.

Our regular pattern of services include

***Sunday 9.30am Sung Parish Eucharist** – Common Worship.

Hymn Books – Common Praise, Hymns Ancient & Modern Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship and New English Hymnal. Eucharistic vestments worn / serving team / robed choir / occasional use of incense at Easter, Christmas, Epiphany, and St Milburga's Day.

***Sunday 6.30pm** (1st and 3rd Sundays) **Choral Evensong** with sermon – 3rd Sunday is usually a 'locally led' Evensong with laity leading the worship.

We are at present reviewing our All-Age Worship in the light of lockdown and aim to reinstate an appropriate service in the Autumn of 2022.

***Sunday 8.00am** (1st Sunday of the Month) **Said Eucharist** – traditional language

In addition to this, there are regular weekday offices, Eucharists and a weekly time of Prayer on a Monday morning.



The Wenlock Team takes the Occasional Offices very seriously and are an integral part of our mission, pastoral care, as well as outreach.

Special Services include

A variety of Christmas services including a popular Crib Service, Christingle Service and Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter are marked by an Ash Wednesday Sung Eucharist with Ashing Ceremony, Palm Sunday outdoor procession with donkey and palms, Maundy Thursday Solemn Eucharist with stripping of the altars and vigil, Good Friday Last Hour Ecumenical Service, Holy Saturday and Easter Day Sung Eucharist. We also host the Civic Service for the Mayor and Town Council and other town services such as the St Milburga Pie Blessing and the Wenlock Festival Service. We take part in local ecumenical events and services, including the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christian Aid and the annual Charity Service. The Team Bereavement Service is very well attended with congregation from the whole team area.

Activities

Some of the activities that play an important part in the life of the church and community include

- Active band of ringers
- Church Choir with juniors and adults maintaining a strong choral tradition
- Environmental Group
- Encircled in Care – Dementia Friendly Church
- Flower Guild
- Mothers Union
- Prayer and Bible Study Groups
- Contemplative Prayer
- Monthly Ploughman's Lunch (Suspended due to Covid)
- Godly Play
- Altar Servers Team
- Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Course, Cressage

Resources

- Enthusiastic Tower Captain
- Organist and Director of Music plus two assistant organists
- Active Environmental Group
- Active Encircled in Care Dementia Friendly Church Group
- Supportive team of Sidesmen, readers and intercessors
- Retired clergy and laity who lead and host various groups
- Up-to-date Website with online diary – www.muchwenlockchurch.co.uk
- Wenlock Herald Team – Produce a parish magazine with town and church news serving the surrounding villages - circulation 1800
- Meeting room, toilet and kitchenette facilities in church

The Building

The building is greatly treasured and valued by the local community. Set in a grassed churchyard with few headstones or memorials this Grade 1 listed church building is in good overall condition, as stated in our 2018 Quinquennial report. New lead roofs to the South Aisle, Lady Chapel and Chancel were completed in 2013 and a new Nave Roof completed in 2017. The Bishop Hereford blessed the new Nave Roof and featured in the BBC 'A Vicar's Life.'

All windows have been restored in recent years and are in good condition apart from one over the North Door. We have level access, disabled parking and toilet / baby change facilities. The Brookes Room is virtually soundproof with speakers relaying the service to anyone using it during services for crèche purposes. We have a small kitchenette area and clear floor space at the west end for social events, our monthly coffee mornings and Ploughman's Lunch (currently suspended due to Covid). Local community-based organisations are encouraged to make use of the space for a variety of events. Numerous concerts and recitals take place throughout the year. We also act as an examination centre for the Royal School of Church Music and are proud that Much Wenlock Parish Church had the largest number of children and young people attending the RSCM Summer School in Bath prior to lockdown.





Plough Sunday



Crib Service



Harvest Supper



**Terry Waite CBE
Wenlock Festival 2022**



Priory Eucharist Following Lockdown



**Bishop Richard
Filming in Wenlock Priory**



Butty Van – Borderlands Chaplaincy



St Milburga Well Blessing



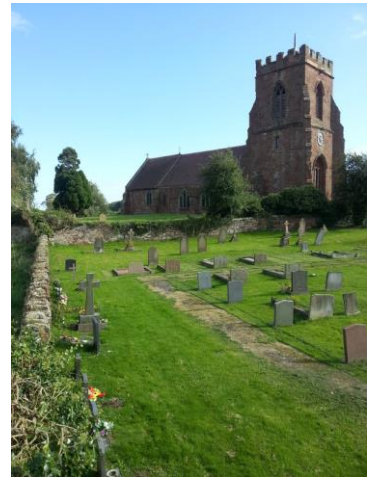
Aerial Shot of Much Wenlock

The Parishes of the Team

Berrington

Berrington is a geographically large parish with an ancient parish church waiting a decision from the Church Commissioners over who will be responsible for its care as a redundant church.

The main centre of population is at Cross Houses, where some 850 people live in an estate that is more like a detached suburb of Shrewsbury than the rural area in which it is set. Berrington village consists of around 50 people and is situated some 7 miles north-west of Much Wenlock. It has a village hall but relies on other amenities from its near neighbour Cross Houses and has easy access to Shrewsbury. All Saints Church dates from the C14th. It has a number of attractive features and is in a good state of repair, having had its roof repaired very recently.



Betton Strange

Betton Strange is a small hamlet, with a population of about 100 with 5 young people. It is close to Shrewsbury but separated from it by the by-pass.

St Margaret's Church is a small Victorian chapel-of-ease in moderate condition with no electricity or other facilities. It is approached on foot through a cobbled mews and small wood. Again, this church connected with Berrington is also awaiting a decision from the Church Commissioners over who will be responsible for the building once it is formally made redundant.



The Deanery plan is to legally transfer the Parishes of Berrington and Betton Strange to the Condover benefice in the long term.

Bourton

Bourton is a small village of some 100 inhabitants, situated 3 miles SW of Much Wenlock on the main road through the Corvedale.

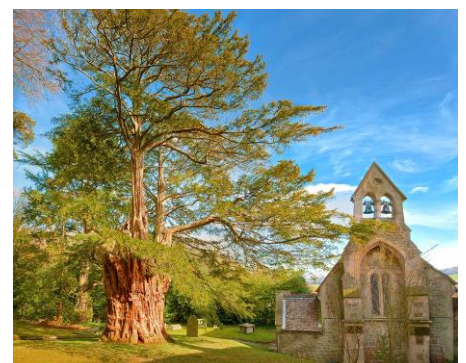
Holy Trinity Church, Bourton has Saxon origins and the Saxon font remains but most of the church has been rebuilt over the centuries. In 1838, it was recorded as a chapel of Holy Trinity, Much Wenlock.

There is one monthly service which is either Morning Prayer service or a Eucharist.

Church Preen

Church Preen is a community of 70 inhabitants situated roughly 6 miles west of Much Wenlock. Most inhabitants are middle aged or retired. There is one service a month attracting a congregation of ten. In the community, there is a primary school to which the church has links and a modern Village Hall, which also serves Hughley, but no other amenities.

St John the Baptist Church dates from C12th. Once a part of a monastery that was linked to Wenlock Priory, it boasts one of the oldest yew trees in the country. The church is adjacent to Preen Manor and is in a good state of repair. The PCC is committed to maintaining and improving the fabric of the building.



Cound

Cound is a village of 600 inhabitants spread over the three parts of the village 7 miles NW of Much Wenlock. The average congregation is of about 15 people, mostly retired but including occasionally some children.

St Peter's Church dates from the C12th to C13th, with a tower of six bells. It is in good repair and welcoming to all. There is a church choir at some services and a bell ringing team. The church has a musical tradition locally. The annual Carol Service attracts a full church. The village has thriving cricket and tennis clubs and an active Guild Hall committee that promotes functions such as Flicks in the Sticks. There is, annually, a very successful church fete. The church has two services a month as well as additional services marking Plough and Sea Sunday.



Cressage

Cressage is a village of some 650 people about 3 miles NW of Much Wenlock, with a good spread of ages and many families. The village has some local facilities: a primary school, a medical practice, a shop, a village hall and a social club. The church is currently halfway through the closure process as there is no PCC or Church Officers. The church is on a busy main road with a very narrow footpath which makes access very difficult.

The Team has made a concerted effort to ensure that our missionary focus is on Christchurch CofE Primary School where The Revd Sam Mann (Rector of Apedale) is actively involved on a weekly basis. The Team is also paying for every Year 6 Child to participate in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Course.



Easthope

Easthope lies one mile to the north of the main Corvedale road, some 5 miles from Much Wenlock. It is a small community with a church and no other facilities.

St Peter's Easthope was a cell for the monks from Wenlock Priory. It has C12th origins although it was largely rebuilt after a fire in 1928. There is a rare carillon bell-ringing mechanism. It is remarkable for its encaustic tiles, chancel window and carved oak screen. Following a successful appeal, the roof was renewed in 2012. The church has a beautiful setting on the edge of the village looking over fields to the Shropshire hills.

There is only one service a month, but with a faithful and active congregation who facilitate an honesty box at the church entrance and have raised well over £1300 for the Hospice and Ukrainian Refugees.



Harley

Harley is a 'thankful village' of 160 inhabitants two miles NW of Much Wenlock.

St Mary's Church is of Norman origin, standing on an ancient mound in the centre of this picturesque village. It is in good repair, with recent renovations to the clock, the heating and the electrics, and the installation of outside access for the disabled.

The average congregation is about 13 at its monthly Eucharist and evensong services, and much larger numbers are attracted to its 'special services' – Welcome to Christmas, Nativity Service, Carol Service, Harvest Festival, Mother's and Father's Day, many of which are 'laity led'. The village choir helps in a number of special services. A monthly 'family breakfast' service is about to be relaunched in the Village Hall in the hope of attracting a number of families from the village and surrounding areas.

The church actively supports the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust and donates 10% of its income to other charities.

The PCC is very active and supportive of the church and very much appreciated by the local community.

Hughley

Hughley is a small village to the northwest of Much Wenlock with some 34 adults and 5 children. There are no amenities but there is a weekly minibus to Wenlock, a caravan park and riding stables.

St John the Baptist is a beautiful C14th church with a fine example of a Jacobean rood screen. The roof was replaced five years ago with fund-raising and matched funding through English Heritage. A service is held every 4th Sunday with an average attendance of 9, with extra services at Harvest for example, with which the local primary school – Church Preen – joins in. There is a warm welcome to those who come, and refreshments are served after services.

Kenley

Kenley is a village of about 100 people, most of whom are middle aged or retired. It is situated some 5 miles west of Much Wenlock with commanding views both south over Apedale and north to Shrewsbury.

St John the Baptist is an ancient church, with some delightful features. It is believed the tower may have been an ancient Roman Watch Tower facing towards the Roman City of Wroxeter. There are two services held each month, a Eucharist, and an Evensong, each attracting about eleven worshippers who are very faithful. There is a Village Hall but no other amenities. Again, the community appreciate the setting of the church and a faithful team of volunteers manage the churchyard with the best view in the entire Team!



Sheinton

Sheinton is a hamlet of around 90 people lying 2 miles north of Much Wenlock. There are no facilities within the village, but Much Wenlock and Cressage are within a 5-minute drive. St Peter and St Paul is an ancient Grade 2* listed building that was extensively refurbished in 1847 and has received substantial further attention over the last 10 years. The church is a highlight and a visual focal point of the village in an area of outstanding natural beauty. There is one service per month plus specials, including The Bake-Off Service in September and a well-attended Christingle and Carol Service. The vision of the PCC is to maintain its Christian principles and to keep the church as the beating heart of the whole community. The PCC intends to expand the congregation encompassing all ages whilst providing a pastoral function for the whole community. They wish to develop the fabric of the church to make it more welcoming and comfortable as a place of worship, and a practical community space.



Shipton

Shipton is a small, agricultural parish in central Corvedale, some 6 miles SW of Much Wenlock. There are approximately 100 inhabitants.

St James' Church was originally a chapel attached to the Priory at Much Wenlock and has several features dating back to the C12th, including the chancel arch. It enjoys a wonderful setting looking south across the Corvedale and the adjacent Shipton Hall. The fabric of the church is in good condition and the church is always open, the local association with The Mayflower Children bringing in many visitors. The congregation is a robust team with a regular 12 to 16 people attending services – a monthly Eucharist and a monthly All Age Worship Service. Special services such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter are very well attended, the latter two being shared with Stanton Long

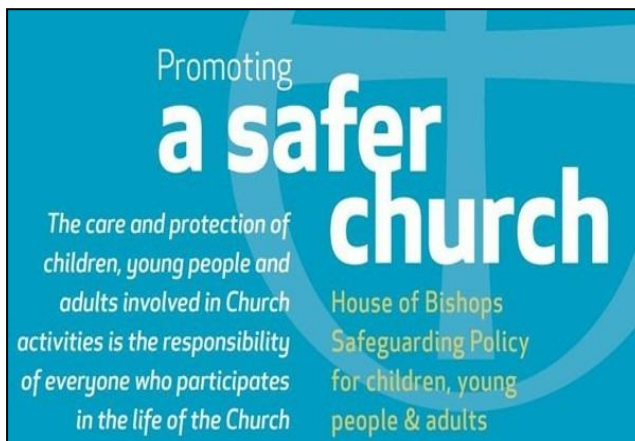


Stanton Long

Stanton Long is situated 8 miles to the SW of Much Wenlock. The parish comprises some 220 inhabitants living in and around the village. It is the essence of a farming community. St Michael and All Angels Church has an ancient foundation, the entrance door dates from the C12th and there is a weather-boarded belfry with pyramidal roof. There is one monthly service plus special services through the year including a bi-annual Christmas Choir Festival.

The PCC is working hard to improve the visitor experience by providing notice boards, more historical information and a separate area for quiet prayer and reflection, as well as an area for children. In addition, the PCC is enjoying a programme of monthly coffee mornings in the Spring and Summer months as well as social and fund-raising events to the benefit of the whole community.





A message of introduction from Sue Gilling

As you may know, I am now in post as your Safeguarding Officer and want to thank you for allowing me to do this and be part of this team. I am new to this church and area and feel honoured to be included in this way.

I realise I have rather large boots to fill and want to thank Francine who has been helpful and kind to me during the past few months in the run up to starting formally.

My background in respect of safeguarding is social work, mostly child protection and fostering, having retired recently only to agree to complete a couple of assessments in Shropshire in the coming months.

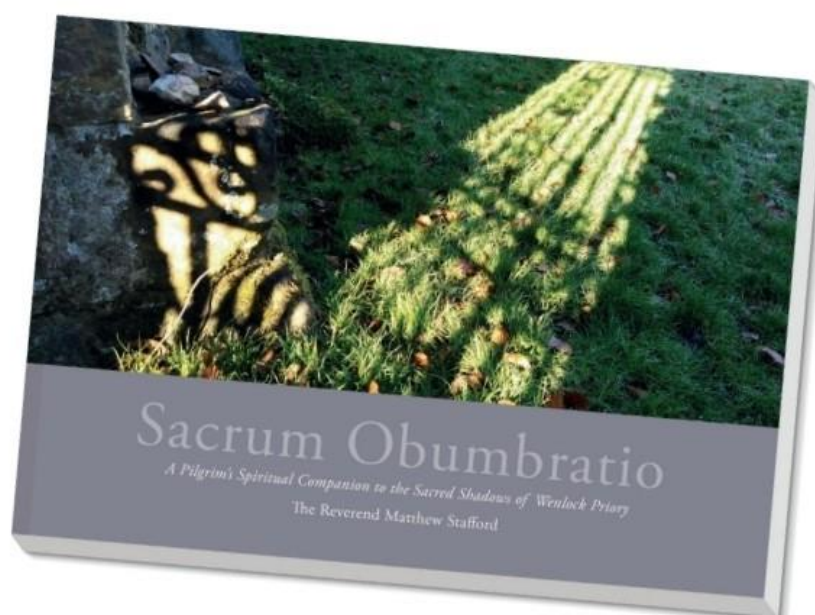
The current request of the Safeguarding Officer by the Diocese is for the new Safeguarding Dashboard to be worked on and I am in contact with the safeguarding Team in Hereford about this so I may need to ask the odd question of people and request information for DBS checks.

My promise to you is to do the very best in this role and to be available. I am really looking forward to being part of the team and making a contribution.

I can be contacted by email on suegilling62@gmail.com or by phone on **07891667952**.

Additional Information

Diocesan Website	www.hereford.anglican.org
Wenlock Team Website	www.wenlockchurches.co.uk
Much Wenlock Church Website	www.muchwenlockchurch.co.uk
Facebook Pages –	Much Wenlock Parish Church Much Wenlock Parish Church Choir Friends of Holy Trinity Much Wenlock
Much Wenlock Guide	www.muchwenlockguide.info
Virtual Shropshire	www.virtual-shropshire.co.uk
Schools	
Much Wenlock Primary School	www.muchwenlock.shropshire.sch.uk
Christ Church Cressage C of E Primary School	www.christchurchcressage.org
Brockton C of E Primary School	www.brocktonprimary.uk.org
Church Preen Primary School	www.churchpreenschool.org.uk
William Brookes School and VI Form	www.williambrookes.com



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The Reverend Matthew Stafford

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