The United Benefice of Fyfield, Moreton, Bobbingworth and Willingale with Shellow Bowells and Berners Roding

Parish Profile 2015
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Our New Incumbent:

In the light of God’s call, our shared vision is to forge a long-term strategy which places our churches at the centre of community activity, with the purpose of promoting Christian mission.

We are looking for a priest who:-

• is enthusiastic to tell the story of Jesus
• will be a good preacher and teacher to enliven and grow our faith
• is a good listener
• is a good communicator, able to engage with the wider group of parishioners as well as the regular congregation and is good also in the written word, parish magazines and communications to the wider parish
• will administer to our diverse group of villages, bringing them together whilst enabling them to retain their individuality
• is willing to retain the traditional forms of worship whilst encouraging new ideas
• will be willing to become involved in all aspects of life within our benefice
• is keen to work closely with other colleagues in the unit and is prepared to embrace further re-organisation and change
• has good organisational skills in order to lead our ministerial team both lay and ordained
• will develop the involvement of our local school children in our services and enjoy working in our two local schools
• will offer pastoral care to non-church-going parishioners
• will give clear witness of their faith and encourage and support church members in their daily worship
• will encourage regular giving
• will help us to develop our church buildings to ensure that they all continue to be well maintained and have ‘fit for purpose’ facilities
• will support and advise our wedding couples and those working towards confirmation
The Four Parishes of Bobbingworth, Fyfield, Moreton and Willingale

The United Benefice forms part of the Epping & Ongar Deanery, administered by the Archdeaconry of Harlow and within the Diocese of Chelmsford. Located in the heart of Essex, bordering the small town of Chipping Ongar; approximately midway between Harlow, and Chelmsford. Central London can be reached by tube and train in less than an hour. Together, the four parishes cover approximately 9000 acres with a road distance of about 9 miles between the furthest points. Although there are small concentrations of population, many homes are comparatively isolated and availability of personal transport is essential.
Our People

- 1 Self Supporting Minister
- 2 Readers
- 7 Churchwardens

The parishes have worshipped together as a United Benefice for more than 15 years and are united by a close bond of fellowship and a common mission to continue to grow our congregation and provide spiritual support to our parishes.

Our Services

The parishes hold a United Benefice service on the fifth Sunday of the month, as well as working together to ensure continuity and logic in the program of services around the special festivals and other important dates in the calendar. Our principle aim is to ensure that a family service and Holy Communion service are held in the benefice each Sunday.

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<tr>
<th>PARISH</th>
<th>1st Sunday</th>
<th>2nd Sunday</th>
<th>3rd Sunday</th>
<th>4th Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>FYFIELD</td>
<td>11.00am Family Service/Café Church</td>
<td>11.00am Holy Communion</td>
<td>11.00am Family Service</td>
<td>11.00am Morning Prayer (Lay lead)</td>
<td>United Benefice Service - rotate around the parishes</td>
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<td>MORETON</td>
<td>9.30am Holy Communion</td>
<td>6.00pm Holy Communion</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.30am Family Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOVINGER</td>
<td>11.00am Family Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.00am Family Communion</td>
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<tr>
<td>WILLINGALE</td>
<td>6.00pm Holy Communion</td>
<td>9.30am Family Service</td>
<td>6.00pm Evening Prayer (Lay lead)</td>
<td>9.30am Holy Communion</td>
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- In addition to our services, we provide a number of other pastoral activities such as men’s and prayer breakfasts, filling station, fortnightly bible study groups, holiday Club for children of primary school age, four-parishes choir performs seasonally, bell-ringing; three groups operate in the four parishes, mostly ringing weekly.

These activities are conducted for, and open to, all members of our community. Other activities, such as fetes and the annual Rose Queen Festival draw support from across all the parishes.
The Deanery of Epping Forest and Ongar

The United Benefice of Fyfield, Moreton, Bobbingworth and Willingale with Shellow Bowells and Berners Roding is part of the Epping Forest and Ongar Deanery. Prior to 2013, the parishes were situated within the Ongar Deanery, but in 2013, in order to promote mission and provide mutual support, the Ongar Deanery joined with Epping Forest to form one deanery. Figure 1 shows the extent of the deanery:

Figure 1 - EPPING FOREST AND ONGAR DEANERY
(NB the Deanery does not include Nazeing, Roydon, Sheering)

The deanery is developing three Mission and Ministry Units - Ongar, Epping Forest South and Epping Forest North - and it is currently envisaged that the united benefice will be part of the Ongar Unit which will contain the following parishes:

Blackmore St Laurence w Stondon Massey SS Peter & Paul
Chipping Ongar St Martin w Shelley St Peter
Fyfield St Nicholas w Moreton St Mary, Bobbingworth St Germain & Willingale St Christopher w Shellow & Berners Roding
Greensted juxta Ongar St Andrew w Stanford Rivers St Margaret
High Laver All Saints w Magdalen Laver St Mary Magdalen w Little Laver St Mary the Virgin
Matching St Mary w Matching Green St Edmund
High Ongar St Mary the Virgin w Norton Mandeville All Saints
As a deanery, we have acknowledged the importance of these units initially developing informally and organically, in order that the right configurations are eventually put in place.

There are currently 19.5 stipendiary clergy, 1 house for duty and 6 self-supporting ministers serving in the deanery and a number of lay ministers. By 2025, there will be fewer stipendiary ministers in the deanery, but a greater number of SSM’s and lay ministers.

It is envisaged that the United Benefice will form close links with the neighbouring rural parishes of Matching and the Lavers and that pastoral reorganisation in the future could lead to all these parishes being served by one stipendiary priest together with a team of self-supporting clergy and lay leaders. As the Mission and Ministry Unit continues to develop it is anticipated that there will be further integration as ministers and churches meet together for prayer and fellowship and to work more closely with one another in mission initiatives.

With a focus on Transforming Presence and the Diocesan strategy of Re-imagining Ministry, the deanery places a high importance on mission and on discerning and developing vocations. We see Lay Training as a priority for enabling the local church to be better equipped for mission and ministry.

The deanery has a parish share allocation of £1,259,688 for 2016, with the United Benefice having a total share of £37,297. Parishes in the deanery have generally responded positively and worked hard, to meet their parish share obligations. We currently work with a diocesan model to apportion the share to parishes, but in the future it is expected that there will be unit allocations based on ministry costs.

The Chapter meets bimonthly at lunchtime and we rotate the day and the venue, to enable as many clergy as possible to be able to attend meetings.

The deanery looks forward to welcoming the new Priest.

Revd Canon Joyce Smith
Area Dean
October 2015
The Church of St Germain, Bobbingworth

Vision Statement: In the light of God’s call, and our situation here, our vision is to renew and improve a sense of community and fellowship based on Christian values.

About the Parish

Our parish of Bobbingworth is located between Chipping Ongar and North Weald off the A414 road. We are 11 miles from the county town of Chelmsford. Our environment is an attractive rural landscape, typically Essex farmland, mostly arable. There is a golf course on the edge of the parish and a recently developed nature park. We have a small scattering of businesses in the parish including Ashlyn’s Organic Farm and Café. Our community has a population of approximately 280 which consists of farmers, landowners, commuters and those that work in the local towns of Epping, Brentwood and Chelmsford. There are many young families in the area who attend either the local primary school of Moreton or other public and state schools in the surrounding towns. Located within our parish is the beautiful house of Blake Hall, home to the Capel-Cure family for many generations. The family run a wedding business which is located in their magnificent Tudor barns within the grounds of the house.

About the Church

The church and its people

We are a very friendly group of people consisting mainly of young families with their children. We have created a relaxed and informal atmosphere and everyone particularly enjoys a chance to chat at our after service teas and coffees and biscuits. Great friendships have been forged through attendance at church. We have two enthusiastic and long standing church wardens. We hold two services a month at St Germain’s: a family service and a family communion. Both of the services are well attended with approximately 40 adults and 10 children although our core church family, mainly from inside the parish, is a little smaller. Our congregation numbers are boosted by couples and their families who are marrying at Blake Hall and choose to use St Germain’s for their wedding ceremony. Music plays an important role and we have a regular organist who is also choir master of the Four Parishes Choir. Some members of our congregation are part of the choir which sing at the Christmas carol services. We continue to encourage the congregation to participate in the services by reading or organising prayers. Some of our teenage members have also acted as altar servers.

The church and the community

We hold approximately 15 weddings year at St Germain’s. Our couples have the support of our verger in organising their wedding at the church and marriage preparation is held within the benefice. We also hold a number of baptisms for children with some of our wedding
couples returning to have their children baptised with us. We have recently enjoyed a marriage blessing during our family service. Although most wedding couples live away from the local area it has been a joy for us when a few have returned to worship with us. We have a number of events throughout the year and special services which bring our church family and other members of the community into St Germain’s. Our harvest festival service and lunch held at Blake Hall is a wonderful occasion and is both a fundraising opportunity and a chance to bring all members of our parish together. We also recently held a ‘Riding Lights’ theatre production at Blake Hall to celebrate the Olympic games being held in our area. Our rogation service is also held in the community usually in one of our farmer’s barns. Our Pilgrimage to Bethlehem Christmas Eve service is extremely well attended (approximately 150) by families from all over the locality. Fund raising continues to unite our village life. Our ‘At Home’ summer fete is always a popular event and our main fundraising activity for the year with beautiful flowers in the church, delicious ploughman’s lunches and afternoon tea as well as other fun stalls. We also recently held a barn dance at a local farm which again brought our village together and raised much needed funds.

The church and its buildings
Our church is a 16th century listed building with later additions with boxed pews seating about 100 people. The chancel houses the simple organ and choir stalls. The chancel also boasts a beautiful stained-glass window. There is a small vestry at the back of the church which has recently had new kitchen units installed and a new stone floor laid. The only entrance is through the tower porch which is also the ringing chamber for a peal of 6 bells in good ringing order. Over the last couple of years we have completely replaced the nave and chancel roofs. But as usual our building is a blessing and a curse and we are looking to undertake further urgent work on the tower roof. Other projects in the pipeline include the replacement of wooden floor and redecoration. Our heating system is also in need of updating. We have few facilities (although we do have a toilet!) and we are the smallest church building in the benefice. Our mission action plan contains the desire to improve on our facilities to accommodate our congregation’s desire for a Sunday school at St Germain’s. We have been able to meet our parish share in full for many years and hope to continue to do so. We have made renewed efforts to increase regular giving which has had some success.
The Church of St Nicholas, Fyfield

Our Vision Statement: *In the light of God’s call, and our situation here, our vision is:*

That our church should provide the focus for a spirit of open fellowship and care amongst all those residing in the village.

That church members should work with neighbouring parishes to discover new ways to extend Christ’s work in the area.

That there should be a continuing liaison between Dr Walker’s Primary School and the church in promoting mutually beneficial activities between church members, staff, children and parents.

That local scouting and guiding groups should be encouraged to become more involved with the life of their local church and that younger church members might be encouraged to join with any church youth groups in adjoining parishes.

About the Parish

The rural parish of Fyfield has an adult population of about 650 people and an estimated 150 children. 21 adults are listed on the electoral role. Much of the population is concentrated in the centre of the village, with the rest distributed widely. Some dwellings are very isolated but the village also includes three modern housing estates. A proportion of the population commutes to work away from Fyfield, but there is also a limited amount of commercial activity within the village, some of which provides jobs for Fyfield people. Types of housing vary widely and include owner-occupier housing, farm dwellings, retirement bungalows, private and local authority rented housing and housing association homes.

Village Life

A thriving primary school in the centre of the village attracts families from a wide area, although the security necessities placed upon schools in recent years have reduced the degree to which the children of the school are drawn into the everyday life of Fyfield. The Head Teacher works to reverse this separation and the school has become more involved in church activities, which is in line with our vision statement.

A large and well-maintained village field attracts sporting organisations, with a regular program of local-league football matches and a successful cricket team. The latter includes a well-supported youth section. The adjacent village hall is used throughout the week by a number of different community groups and a social club operates in the hall. Organised activities in Fyfield include WI, Playgroup, bell-ringing - tower and handbell, carpet bowls and dancing classes. The wider district offers clubs and other groups to satisfy a broad range of interests.

Scouting and Guiding is a long-standing and successful part of village life, with a large, well-appointed Scout headquarters completed in the 1990s.

Village facilities include a shop and Post Office and two public houses.
About our Church

Worship
The liturgical service schedule in St Nicholas’, Fyfield includes both modern and traditional formats, and once a month the service is conducted by the laity. Currently Fyfield is part of a joint benefice with the neighbouring parishes of Willingale, Moreton and Bobbingworth and on a rotating basis the four parishes unite each month to celebrate Holy Communion together.

The interior space within Fyfield church is very open and so it is difficult to use our building as a meeting place for dedicated activities for children during family or more formal church services. However, that same large space offers advantages when large gatherings are anticipated, with an open area at one end and serving facilities from the adjacent kitchen.

Pastoral Care
Within the Church in Fyfield progress has been made in placing emphasis upon pastoral care, the welfare of parishioners in need and the place of the Church in the village in general. Those active members of our church work hard to ensure the continuance of organised worship in Fyfield and the seasonal festival services attract a wide following, covering all age groups. Although the age of many of the congregation at our weekly services has risen and there has been only modest increase in the number attending, some younger people have commenced regular attendance. New residents on the gated housing estates have not involved themselves significantly with their church. The minister who takes responsibility for the cure of souls in Fyfield will need to help us explore ways to expand the role of the Church to embrace everyone; young, middle-aged and old and actively encourage newcomers to the village, as well as existing non-attending residents, to form a pattern of involvement in their Church which will endure for their lifetimes. Our ambition is that our children will grow up feeling comfortable about attending church regularly and with the reassuring knowledge that the church will always be there for them when they need it. Actively encouraging their involvement in the church organisation now will help to ensure that they, in turn, will keep the church alive for future generations. We envisage that the priest who takes up this challenge will be alive to these priorities from his or her own family circumstances and will have the qualities necessary to engage with all sectors of the parish.
Fundraising

Outside of the liturgical life of St Nicholas’, many more people involve themselves in the practical activities organised to further the work of the Church and to ensure the survival of our village church. Nevertheless, and in spite of widespread goodwill towards the church, fundraising is a continual challenge. A disproportionate amount of the money raised comes from special events, rather than from planned giving. In recent years, we have been set an increasingly challenging target for the Parish Share but, although we have not always managed to pay all of our share, we did pay it all this year.

The special events are illustrated well by the annual flower festival organised by, and centred around the church. Residents of all ages open their gardens to the public and assist in many ways to make this a successful fund-raiser for what they regard as “their church”. A monthly coffee morning, run by dedicated members of our congregation raises money for extra projects which improve the quality of the church environment. Other smaller events throughout the year are also supported enthusiastically. A “Friends of St Nicholas’” charity was established in 2002 to facilitate restoration to our mediaeval church building and it continues to enjoy a healthy membership from committed villagers. An enormous amount of work has been completed during the last decade and the final project is in preparation, the completion of which will leave the building fit to hand on to future generations.

We believe that the general willingness of residents to support the practical side of the church’s place in the village is evidence of the value they place upon the Church in Fyfield. We look forward to welcoming a new priest who can lead us as we work to prepare it for the next generation.
The Church of St Mary, Moreton

About the Parish

Moreton is a village in the Epping Forest district of the County of Essex, England. It is located 7.2 miles east of Harlow and 6.1 miles from Epping with its’ tube line into London. The journey from Moreton to Central London takes about an hour.

Two thousand years ago Moreton was the point at which a Roman style road, connecting Great Dunmow (Stane Street) to London, crossed the Cripsey Brook. Today the bridge that crosses the Cripsey is still a feature of Moreton. There remain several substantial village houses from the late Medieval / early modern period, as well as two popular traditional English pubs.

The surrounding area is agricultural, and there are several small Companies within, and close to, the village including a small cereal, pulse and oilseed rape seed storage and distribution unit, a premium quality soil and loam supplier and a company that organises battlefield tours. A number of villagers run their own businesses and our local parish magazine is a popular forum for advertising. That apart, many of the villagers commute to Harlow, Chelmsford or to London to work.

Our village population numbers around 275 and is a friendly and supportive community with a good range of activities including a monthly quiz/film club, book club, men’s breakfast group, monthly WI and horticultural society, many of which are based around our small village hall. Although the village has two small estates (less than 50 houses) for the elderly and 50% of those on the electoral role are retired, the village has a good mix of young and more mature families. A recent small development of 8 new houses has meant that the village has grown in size, although our closeness to London means that affordable housing is limited. The village has a small show person’s site and although often travelling, they are supportive of the church and community and in 2014 and 2015 an open air service was held on the site.

Moreton has a popular Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School that benefits from strong links to St Marys church. The school supports a number of church activities including Lent lunches, the annual Rose King & Queen Festival (pictured), Easter and Christmas School services and at least once termly church visits. Our Church Wardens are actively involved with the School and Rev Albert Watson (our self-supporting Minister) is on the board of Governors. Although many of the school pupils are from outside of the village, we have worked closely with the school to encourage pupils to come to our services to read their prayers and join in the children’s activities. This has worked well and one of our objectives for our mission action plan is to reach out further and grow the number of families and teenagers joining our services.
About our Church

St Mary the Virgin is a 13th Century church on the edge of the village, known in the parish for its warm welcome and the tea, coffee and homemade cake provided after a service.

We offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. A revised pattern of services across the benefice was introduced in September 2014 to prevent duplication of service. We also have a number of church groups outside of the regular services to provide additional spiritual support to our community and congregation. A bible study group meets at least fortnightly.

The average level of attendance across all of the services during 2014 was 45, boosted by our large services at Easter and Christmas and our school services. At present there are 15 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll.

Our Church is clean, tidy and in good repair thanks to a supportive team of volunteers. Our biggest challenge is that we have no toilet/kitchen facilities and a successful application has recently been made for a grant to pay for a feasibility study to for installing a toilet and kitchen facilities in the church. We are fortunate to have FOSMs (Friends of St Mary’s) to support us in our fundraising and, once our plans are drawn up, will be working with them closely to raise money for the work that we are aiming to carry out in spring 2016. Kitchen and toilet facilities will enable us to use the church for a wider variety of activities.

Fundraising

Our PCC, supported by a number of the congregation, held a number of fund raising events during 2014 including a quiz, Burns night supper, Christmas soup and bazaar morning, spring lunch and running refreshment and other stalls at the Rose Queen Festival.

These events in conjunction with similar events held throughout the Benefice enabled the Benefice share to be paid in full for 2014. For 2015 and 2016, we are planning a number of fundraising events to enable us to continue to pay our Parish Share.
The Church of St. Christopher, Willingale

The parish of St. Christopher’s, Willingale with Shellow and Berners Roding is part of the combined Benefice of Fyfield with Fyfield, Moreton and Bobbingworth.

Summary

This profile gives a description of a small but strong rural community, an active church and a much improved church building with some growth and good potential. We are situated between Ongar & Chelmsford with a population of 500 (2011 census). There is a PCC with 9 members including 2 Churchwardens. The Parish Share has been paid in full and Gift Aid recovered.

Who we are:

The church is set amongst a vibrant community with a growing congregation. The building is much restored. The church has both toilet facilities and a tea making area.

What we do:

Although the village now has no school, shop or pub, it does have 2 churches in the midst of the village, the parish church of St. Christopher (14th C) & St. Andrew’s church (12th C) is redundant and in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. There is a well-supported Sports & Social Club and an excellent Village Hall which is used for all types of functions from Badminton to Amateur Dramatics to Fund raising. The Church organises special services for all the important Festivals (including May Day & Rogation) to include all villagers - young and old. Average attendances: morning Communion 20; Evening Communion 12, Family Service 26 & Evening Prayer introduced in September 2014 is popular with average attendance of 15. Fund raising: An annual Gift Day is held on the 2nd Saturday of September & funds raised by the Village Fete are shared between the Church and the Village Hall.

How we go about doing what we do:

The wider community are supportive of church activities and the church is equally supportive of village activities and bell ringing has become a thriving pastime. There is a quarterly parish magazine - ‘What’s On in Willingale’. The PCC organises concerts, quiz nights & lectures. Several annual fund-raising events are run in aid of both the Church and the Village Hall. The Sports & Social Club runs events to benefit various village activities.
About the Church:

- The style of service varies with the type; Family Services (1 per month) are fairly informal with volunteer participation; Evensong (1 per month) uses the Book of Common Prayer & Holy Communion services use Holy Communion Order One - Common Worship.
- Festival services are arranged for Easter; Mothering Sunday; Harvest; Remembrance & Christmas.
- Candles are lit for all services & altar cloths change with the liturgical seasons.
- Celebrant is generally vested.
- A server assists with Holy Communion.
- Laity read lessons.
- Children are encouraged to take part in all services.
- Music - since the retirement of the regular organist in 2014, some services are accompanied by CDs.
- Refreshments are served after all morning services & after Festival services.
- Bible study groups meet on a weekly basis in various parts of the Benefice.
- Fresh Expressions: Café church is organised on a monthly basis and a ‘Filling Station’ group has recently been set up and meets monthly.
- Flowers & cleaning are carried out by members of the congregation and wider community.

Two testimonies from newish members of our congregation:

One youngish lady who suffered the unexpected loss of her mother, who was a stalwart in the community, found the community of the church a great support and welcoming. Another new regular attendee, who was brought up in the village but now lives 11 miles away, says of the church “I grew up in the Parish of Willingale and after having moved away for university and work, I resumed attending Willingale church on a regular basis in the months leading up to our wedding. We found the church to be very welcoming, the congregation all made us feel welcome and all church ‘officials’ were very approachable. Since our first attendance back in February 2015 we have become regular members. We do both appreciate the more traditional liturgy provided in the services and the traditional Holy Communion services and evening prayer, following the Book of Common Payer, are most welcome. Willingale Church is a true spiritual haven for us in our very busy lives.”
The Church Building:

Much work has been carried out since 2010. The bells were re-hung with an additional 2 bells to make a peel of 6 bells in 2011/12; the base of the tower (originally the vestry) has been turned into a multi-purpose toilet & tea making area (2012); interior of church was completely re-decorated in 2013 with a sound system and new lighting installed; 2014 saw major restoration of exterior masonry and installation of new heating. During autumn 2015 churchyard footpath lighting will be installed and in 2016 the entire roof will be replaced. There are plans to re-order the north aisle to create a children’s area and a flexible style of tables and chairs for serving refreshments.
The Rectory is located on the lovely Elmbridge Estate which is situated on the edge of the village of Fyfield, close to the school and local facilities.

It is a modern, detached property with a good sized garden and a double of garage. There is gas central heating, double glazing throughout and solar panels.

Upstairs the accommodation consists of 5 bedrooms, one with an en suite bathroom, a further bathroom with a shower, bath and WC.

Downstairs there is a large kitchen, cloakroom, study, lounge with an open fire and a dining room.