



*St Peter's Church*

# Work in Progress

**The Parish of  
The Holy Cross  
(The Abbey)  
Shrewsbury**

**September 2009**

*View from the Abbey tower*



## THE PARISH OF THE HOLY CROSS (THE ABBEY) SHREWSBURY

### A WORK IN PROGRESS

**W**ELCOME to the Parish of the Holy Cross. Following the departure of our Vicar to be Archdeacon, we are seeking his successor. Six years ago when we drew up our Parish Profile we entitled it 'Ripe for Development', viewing ourselves as a parish in need of revitalisation and a fresh approach to pastoral leadership.

In those six years, development has gone on apace, our vision is brighter and more united and we are stepping onward into light with increasing confidence.

This is all to the good, but time is finite and much remains to be done, not least, listening prayerfully to the direction in which God wants us to go. We are a Work in Progress.

### The Parish

The Parish of The Holy Cross is situated within a loop of the River Severn which provides for public open space and has a population of over 10,000 with on-going new-build housing for both residential and social purposes as well as considerable numbers of properties from the 1930s to the 1970s and some considerably older. The majority of this stock is privately owned or rented with smaller numbers of social housing and some sheltered accommodation and residential care homes.

The population presents a broad cross section representative of the county generally. Whilst the parish is one of relative prosperity, there are some significant areas of poverty and social disadvantage.

Three primary and two secondary schools provide for education and although there is no specific church school, the clergy are regularly welcomed to all the schools in the parish. There is also a school catering for four to nineteen year olds with profound learning difficulties.

There are two industrial/business parks as well as a number of retail outlets, six public houses, the divisional police headquarters, a medical practice, a dentist, two pharmacies and a funeral service.



*The parish looking northwards from the Abbey tower*

## Clergy profile

In our 2003 profile the PCC's vision was to:

- increase the numbers in the regular congregation
- develop worship appropriate to the different styles of the church buildings and the congregations which they attract
- develop a proactive pastoral ministry around the parish as well as the development of a local ministry team from amongst the worshipping congregation
- develop as a matter of considerable importance policies to successfully promote work with children and young people

These points continue to be our vision for the future.

- Worshipping numbers have increased in both churches and need to be consolidated and built on
- Worship styles are evolving with a less formal style at St Peter's and more formal worship with a robed choir in the Abbey
- Pastoral ministry has improved considerably with the advent of a clergy team and there are many strands of local ministry formally with two licensed Readers and less formally from within the congregation
- Work with children and young people has blossomed with Explorers at the monthly All Age Worship service at St Peter's. A similar Explorers project is ready to be introduced at the Abbey. The Abbey hosts the Diocese Open Door for three very active days during October for schools from across the county and is also the setting for 'Rev Ted' tours for reception classes and a Signs and Symbols tour for older primary school children as part of their curriculum, putting the building, its purpose and its use in current context.



The Abbey is increasingly coming to be considered as the County Church of Shropshire and as such hosts a number of large formal services - celebration of the Women's Land Army, return of the Royal Irish Regiment from active service, Radio Shropshire Carol Concert, commemorations by the Royal British Legion and the Royal Naval Association. The PCC wish that these links continue and are developed and expanded.

*A Royal British Legion parade of standards*

**Mission Statement** - We are the people of God,  
developing and maturing as Christian Disciples,  
open to God and open to people.  
We have a shared responsibility  
to use our gifts for the whole of church life,  
within the parish, the town and the wider world.

This statement was developed and adopted at a PCC Away Day some years ago and could now usefully be reconsidered in the light of the work on Healthy Churches which has been the focus of subsequent PCC Away Days.

We are looking for an experienced priest to be

- A Pastor-Teacher leading the clergy team and growing the congregation spiritually and numerically
- A Team Builder willing and able to train and inspire Assistant Curates and the congregation at large to bring out the talents and gifts latent within us
- A Liturgist to maintain the liturgical focus of our worship and develop it creatively in both churches within the framework of Common Worship
- A Facilitator to develop a collaborative team creating genuine partnership and valuing all ministries to enable teams of initiators to grow.



*The Abbey church from Portobello*

## **Churches and Parish Buildings**

The Abbey church of St Peter and St Paul is an ancient church on a vast scale. It has been a centre of worship for many centuries, founded in 1083 by Roger de Montgomery, a relative of William the Conqueror. The church was considerably restored in 1886 by J L Pearson who reconstructed the east end and made a number of other alterations to the building. The size of the building, seating up to 600, makes it suitable for many types of worship and activities. For a more detailed historical description a new edition of the Abbey Guide is available on request.

Worship at the Abbey is Central in terms of liturgical worship and biblical preaching with a significant robed choir. Services based on Common Worship are:

Sunday	10.00 am	Sung Eucharist
	3.00 pm	Choral Evensong (BCP)
Thursday	12.30 pm	Said Eucharist

Morning Prayer takes place daily at 8.30 am in the Quire and is supported by a regular congregation.

The Abbey benefits from its own and visiting choirs and choral groups who provide Choral Evensong (BCP) regularly during the year. Evening Prayer is said during August.

St Peter's Church is a small brick-built church, seating seventy to one hundred, at the northern end of the parish, built in 1939 to serve the growing population in Monkmoor. This growth has continued post war with the continuing development of local housing areas. Worship is of a less formal nature and services are held on Sundays 10.30 am Eucharist with organist and hymns. A small group usually sings accompanied by a guitar during the distribution of communion.

There is a small, but enthusiastic, Explorers children's group which is held in the adjacent church hall during the Sunday morning service in term time.



*St Peter's Church*

Holy Communion by Extension is regularly practiced to ensure a weekly Eucharist in both churches. There is a team of Lay Assistants who, with Servers and an Altar Team, help with services in both churches. Some Lay Assistants also take Communion to the sick and elderly in the parish.

The average Sunday congregation is 90 in the Abbey including visitors and 30 at St Peter's.



*The Parish Hall on St Peter's Site*

St Peter's Site also accommodates the Parish Hall which is a modern building of breeze block construction with a large activity area, kitchen, storeroom and toilets. This is used for a variety of events, but during the week and most evenings it is hired out for local activities. Plans are in hand to increase car parking facilities.

The Vicarage is a spacious brick building with an easily maintained garden built in 2001 and purchased by the Diocese.

A Curate's house has also been purchased by the Diocese and is located at the heart of one of the local residential estates.

All the parish buildings and the churches are in a good state of repair. A quinquennial inspection was completed last year and the architect has reported on work required at the Abbey. The PCC retains an architect to advise on repairs and other works as the Abbey is a Grade One listed building in the Shrewsbury Town Centre conservation area. St Peter's church is presently outside the requirements of the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure.

### **Parochial Church Council**

There is one PCC for both churches and the two Churchwardens are elected for the parish as a whole, regularly attending services in both churches. There is representation of both congregations on the PCC and its sub-committees.

The PCC has held a number of Away Days to consider particular aspects of church life and has been working through the Healthy Churches handbook to discover where they are and where they should be heading for.

Some consideration has been given to the formation of a District Church Council for St Peter's but has not received widespread support.

## Ministry

The parish benefits considerably from the clergy team which consists of

- The Vicar
- An Assistant Curate ordained and in second year training
- Assisting Clergy, one retired taking a regular monthly service at St Peter's and a second who is a part-time mental health chaplain at Shelton Hospital and assists both at services and in other aspects of the parish

This is augmented by

- Lay Ministry with two Licensed Readers and other members of the congregation
- Lay Assistants and servers who assist the President at Eucharist, some of whom take the sacrament to the sick and housebound of the congregation
- Abbey Guides and Stewards who keep the Abbey open to visitors during the year and provide a ministry of welcome. The Abbey receives a considerable number of visitors each year from all over the world.

The PCC is also able to employ as paid staff

- A Parish Administrator/Personal Assistant to the Vicar
- A Cleaner and a Handyman in the Abbey Church
- A Verger for occasional services, weddings, funerals
- A Master of Music for the Abbey

The PCC pays for cleaning of the Parish Hall. St Peter's grounds are maintained on a voluntary basis. The churchyard of the Abbey church is closed and the grounds are in the care of the local authority under the Local Government Act of 1972.

## Music at Shrewsbury Abbey

Over the past six years the Music at Shrewsbury Abbey and St Peter's Church has developed considerably. All services now have some sort of music, ranging from two hymns at the monthly baptism service to Choral Evensong every Sunday at 3pm.

The Abbey Choir consists of approximately thirty members across four parts (SATB), the Master of the Music and his two organists/assistants. The choir lead the singing each week at the Sung Eucharist (10am) and this is done to a setting which we are slowly in the process of changing. This is followed at 3pm by Choral Evensong. The service follows the order for Evensong taken from the Book of Common Prayer and attracts a small but regular and faithful congregation. The style of music the choir sing is that of a cathedral-type repertoire and they regularly visit other churches and cathedrals to sing services. Alongside their Sunday duties the choir also sing at weddings and funerals and at other 'special services' such as the annual Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, a requiem on or around All Souls and Choral Eucharist on most of the major feast days (Epiphany, Candlemas, Maundy Thursday etc). We hope to build on this strong musical foundation in the coming years.



*The Abbey choir in procession*

## East End Project

The Abbey Organ is a fine instrument, built by the London firm of William Hill in 1911. It was designed by G R Sinclair who was at that time Master of the Choristers at Hereford Cathedral. Some minor work has been done over the years, but we have been left with a fine Edwardian organ that is now on its last legs. Fund raising has been happening for many years, but to restore the instrument and improve the east vestry we need in the region of £300,000. The faculty has been applied for and we will now need to raise the money.

## Parish Activities

### Alpha and Discipleship Groups

- We have run several Alpha courses and have another scheduled for Autumn 2009.
- As a product of past Alpha courses, we have two discipleship groups which meet regularly for bible study, fellowship, prayer and mutual support.

### Prayer life of the parish

- Morning Prayer: A committed group meet for Morning Prayer in the Abbey at 8.30 each day. Numbers can vary from 3 to 12. We have committed ourselves to pray daily for the interregnum, appointment process and new vicar.
- The Guild of St Winifride has sponsored a number of days of training on prayer. Past leaders include David Runcorn and Mark Ireland, and most recently Russ Parker has led a day on 'Healing Wounded History.'
- The Wednesday evening discipleship group is very committed to prayer, keeps a journal and has been encouraged by many answers to prayer.
- There are many faithful praying individual members of the church.

### Hospitality

- In both churches coffee tea, biscuits and conversation are provided following the Sunday services
- Cafe Benedict: Based on the Benedictine principle of hospitality Cafe Benedict has been running on Saturday mornings from June to October, serving coffees, teas and home-made cakes.
- We are privileged to welcome many visitors, tourists and pilgrims to the Abbey each year. Opportunity to build on the work of our guides and stewards in developing our ministry to them, especially those who are in need or spiritually searching.



*Coffee and conversation at St Peter's*

### Children and youth

- Explorers: A small but enthusiastic group who meet during part of the morning service at St Peter's in term time. There is interest in also developing a group for children at the Abbey.
- Youth: We have a small number of teenagers who find their place in the lives of our churches as acolytes or helping out with Explorers and music. The Abbey is an attractive building to young people and has hosted a number of archdeaconry youth events.
- Schools: We are developing our relationship with local schools, a number of which have used the Abbey for events such as carol services and awards ceremonies. We have

developed a strong relationship with Severndale Specialist School. We have contributed to lessons and assemblies and have welcomed them to St Peter's for their Christmas services and for a 'wedding', which have been very special occasions for all involved.

- Open Door: Three days each October when hundreds of primary school children from across the diocese visit us for an experience of the Abbey. They enjoy lively songs and talks, craft workshops, a labyrinth and tours of the Abbey. Many volunteers from churches across the area enable this to happen.
- Educational visits: We are delighted to welcome school children on visits to the Abbey ranging from the Rev Ted Tour for younger children, to Exploring Signs and Symbols for years 3 and 4.

#### Occasional offices

- Baptisms take place at the Abbey in a special baptism service at 11.30am on the third Sunday of the month, and during the All Age Service at St Peter's on the first Sunday of the month. We operate an open baptism policy but seek to prepare parents and godparents well and help them to understand the promises they will be making. All parents and godparents are invited to a preparation evening or receive a home visit. These services are very popular, we are currently fully booked for 2009! Many guests come and the churches are always packed, often with many non-churchgoers. We currently are seeking ways to make the most of this opportunity and to find ways to help people who come for baptism to be able to find their way into church life. All baptism children receive a card on the anniversary of their baptism, and an invitation to Explorers when they are old enough. A recent encouraging development has been the giving of a Bible to each child, and we are currently exploring starting a weekday group for pre-school children and their carers.
- Weddings: The Abbey is a popular venue for weddings and St Peter's is able to offer a smaller, more intimate setting. All couples are invited to attend The Marriage Preparation Course, and those who have attended have found it very helpful. The parish has adopted the practice of the Diocese concerning the possibility of marriage in church after divorce.
- Funerals: Our funerals ministry is very varied reflecting the diversity of our life as both a county church and as parish church to a large parish with some areas of deprivation. We seek to serve all who come to us well, and there is room for further developing our pastoral follow up of the bereaved. This year we will be inviting bereaved families to a service on All Souls' Day.

There is an Annual Christmas Fair and a Summer Fair which has traditionally been specifically dedicated to raising funds for the restoration of the Abbey.

The Guild of St Winefride (Friends of Shrewsbury Abbey) is an international membership body who pray for the parish and are dedicated to the beautification of the Abbey. They organise visits to explore other churches, usually participating in tea and Evensong.

The Friends of St Peter's is concerned with the support and beautification of St Peter's church and holds an annual May Fair amongst other activities. Part of the proceeds are given to local charities.

The parish supports and fund-raises for three specific charities: the Children's Society, Christian Aid and USPG, particularly in connection with St Luke's Hospital, Milo, Tanzania. In addition the PCC budget includes Outreach of some £4,000 per annum gifted to local, national and international charities. This year we have supported the provision of Holding Crosses for Shelton Hospital service users and continue to pray for them and the ministry there.

Some parishoners take the Bible Reading Fellowship notes.

#### **Parish Finances**

The parish finances are balanced and solvent. The Parish Share/Family Purse for 2009 is set at £41,500. The PCC of the Parish of Holy Cross is pleased to report that there are no arrears and the parish share has been met in full and on time. Clergy expenses are paid in full as claimed on a monthly basis. The Parish Annual Report and Accounts for 2008 are available on application.

## **Shrewsbury Abbey Connexion Limited**

At the West End of the Abbey Church, below the tower, is situated a shop which sells a wide range of items, including those of an improving nature as well as the works of Edith Pargeter (aka Ellis Peters) of Brother Cadfael fame. In order that these trading activities do not attract a tax liability, the PCC has set up Shrewsbury Abbey Connexion Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary company covenanting its profits annually to the PCC.

There are at present five directors of whom the Vicar would be expected to be one. The turnover of the shop is in the region of £21,000. The company accounts are maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts and are incorporated in the PCC's annual accounts. There is a paid Manager who oversees the day to day operation of the company.

As part of the operation of the shop, the Abbey is kept open during the major part of the tourist day by a team of volunteers who staff the shop and act as guides and welcomers to the 45,000 visitors, many of whom are drawn by the exploits of the fictional detective monk, Brother Cadfael, and set in the time of the first English Civil War between Stephen and Matilda. These volunteers are drawn from a considerable area and are not generally regular members of the congregation. The recruitment and retention of sufficient volunteers is a considerable task.

## **Hiring of parish buildings**

Because of its size, the Abbey is ideally suited for performances and exhibitions of all kinds. As well as acting as a concert venue for local musicians, the Abbey is the setting for a performance of the Messiah at Christmas and is also used for school and college prizegiving, and the Scout Annual Meeting.

The Abbey is also the venue for a series of mid-week lunchtime organ recitals from April to October and these regularly attract up to seventy people.

The PCC gains considerable revenue from hiring its buildings. The Abbey itself has areas which can be hired out for meetings, lectures, services and any other suitable event. The Parish Hall is hired out during the week, and the hall and St Peter's church are hired to four bodies who are regular users.

## **Parish Trusts and Trustees**

The PCC benefits from a number of trust funds most of which are invested and monitored by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance:

Trust 619 - Trustees - Vicar and Churchwardens. The income is generally used for insurance and maintenance of the site at St Peter's.

Trust 1745 - Trustee the Vicar only. From the sale of a previous church hall, the PCC designated this as capital for a possible meeting facility on the Abbey site.

Trust 1447 - For the accommodation of an assistant curate or religious working in the parish. Trustees - the PCC.

Holy Cross Church Estate - for the upkeep of the fabric of the Abbey Church and St Giles' Church. Trustees are the Churchwardens of the parish of Holy Cross.

Burke Bequest - for the benefit of the sick and elderly at St Peter's. Trustees Vicar, Churchwardens, one member from Friends of St Peter's.

Abbey Trust - for the general purposes of the Church of England in the parish. Trustees the Bishop of Shrewsbury and the Archdeacon of Salop. For some years the PCC have received grants which enable the employment of the office staff.

## **Other Trusts**

In addition to the Trusts previously listed, the Vicar is also an ex-officio trustee of the following trusts:

Holy Cross Houses - a housing trust responsible for the almshouses across the road from the Abbey church.

Hewitt Trust - a trust for the sick, poor and aged of the parish of Holy Cross. This trust generally pays for the minibus which brings some of the older members of the congregation to the 10.00 am Abbey service on Sundays. A rota from amongst the congregation provides the drivers each Sunday.

Gorsuch, Langley and Prynne Trust - a trust for the relief of the poor of the ancient parish of Holy Cross (the present parishes of Holy Cross and St Giles). Grants in the region of £30,000 are made at Christmas and during the year to suitable applicants.

## **We welcome you**

The PCC and the congregations of the Abbey and St Peter's are looking forward to the appointment of a priest who can work with them to grow and develop the parish and make the most of the opportunities to bring Christ's message to the 10,000 people in the parish, working particularly with children and young people and taking full advantage of the differing nature of our church buildings for worship and outreach.

