The United Benefice of Bradley, Church Eaton, Derrington & Haughton

Benefice Profile
The four Parishes that make up the United Benefice have a combined population of 3,091 people living in 1,282 homes. The combined Parish Share (2019) for the cost of mission is £59,849.

The Parishes are rural in nature with a large farming community, as well as workers from other countries who come to the farms to work as “pickers” for the crops. This section of the population is not included in the figures as they are transient employees who do not live in the area throughout the year.
Welcome to the Parish Profiles of the United Benefice of
St. Mary and All Saints, Bradley
St. Editha’s, Church Eaton
St. Matthews, Derrington
St. Giles, Haughton

OUR CORNER OF STAFFORDSHIRE

This is a beautiful part of Staffordshire, very close to the border with Shropshire, where you can enjoy many quiet walks on well-marked rights of way or watch the narrow boats on the Shropshire Union Canal as it passes close to Church Eaton. Stafford is famous for its Ancient High House, Izaak Walton’s Cottage and its ruined castle, where Shakespeare plays are performed each summer as part of the Stafford Festival. Nearby Shugborough Hall is on the edge of Cannock Chase and the Potteries are close by, as is Alton Towers.

To the south, Birmingham is in easy reach by road and rail with many attractions, ranging from music and ballet to Crufts Dog Show. There are village shops in Haughton and Gnosall (3 miles) as well as supermarkets and more in Stafford and Newport (7 miles). There is a GP surgery and an NHS dentist in Gnosall. We have swimming pools and fitness centres in Stafford and Newport and a tennis and cricket club in Church Eaton.
There are two local state primary schools in Haughton and Church Eaton, both with links to the church. In Stafford there are several state comprehensive secondary schools and one in Penkridge, all about 5 miles away, and state grammar schools in Newport, about 8 miles away. There are also a number of private schools, both primary and secondary, in the locality. Stafford College provides a variety of further education courses, while Rodbaston College provides more rural-based further education.

The local university is Staffordshire University based in Stoke-on-Trent and the universities at Wolverhampton and Keele are accessible via the nearby major routes.

Our Benefice is just west of Stafford and the four churches serve several rural villages. Farming is the main local activity but there are also significant numbers of commuters who work in the surrounding towns and cities. The combined population of the 4 villages is 3,091 with 1282 households. There is easy motorway access north and south on the M6, and the Welsh borders are within an hour’s drive, as is the Peak District.

We are in the Lichfield diocese. All our churches are within a 3-mile radius from the rectory, which is in Haughton, the largest village. The Deanery is in Stafford, some 4 miles away. The benefice is staffed solely by the Rector.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We became a benefice in 2006 and have learnt to work together, so we are united in seeking someone who can:

- Give spiritual leadership and stimulate the prayer life within the parishes.
- Provide pastoral care and promote the development of local care groups.
- Promote ways of growing the church in a rural area.
- Promote recruitment and learning for lay ministry and leadership.
- Help to develop ministry amongst young people and children and build on the opportunities provided by our schools.
- Encourage us to be outward-looking and open to new ideas.
- Help to continue the close co-operation between the four parishes.
- Encourage individuals to develop their talents.
- Develop links between the church and the local communities.
- Extend a warm welcome to all.

WHAT CAN WE OFFER A NEW MINISTER?

- Respect and protect your free time.
- Help, where possible, with the administration of the parishes.
- Supportive worship group teams.
- A warm welcome and the goodwill of our parishioners
AROUND THE BENEFICE

WORSHIP
Style and Tradition of Worship: We are all ‘middle of the road’ Church of England parishes. Basic Pattern of Services: There are currently 4 services across the benefice each Sunday, including a worship group service. There are early morning traditional services at Haughton and Church Eaton and mid-morning celebration of communion or monthly family services. Combined services are held in each church in rotation four times a year, when there is a 5th Sunday in the month. Bradley has a weekly communion service on Thursdays, followed by communion to the sick and housebound. We have also discussed more combined services. Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals: We have a common policy on these and the preparation is usually carried out by the Rector, during the interregnum the churchwardens have fulfilled this role.

EDUCATION AND NURTURE

Pastoral Care: There are not yet any pastoral care groups and at the present time church members carry out this role informally. Similarly, hospital visiting is not only done by the Rector, but also informally by members of the church.

Children’s Education: Haughton has a small Sunday School, whilst Church Eaton host a short youth worship group named “20 is Plenty” on Mondays a@er school. Both of these utilise the skills of lay leaders. Haughton and Derrington also hold a Bible Study Fellowship.

Youth Emmaus is used as a Confirmation Preparation course with lay leaders as well as the Rector. There is also an Adult Emmaus course for spiritual renewal or preparation for confirmation, led by the Rector. A lay-led post confirmation youth group in Church Eaton has lost membership but there is potential for future work with the Youth Club.

Schools: There are two primary schools: Haughton St. Giles (106 on roll) is a church school; Church Eaton (66 on roll) is an ancient foundation. Both have close links with the church, with clergy input into the classroom and visits to church by the children. The Rector is an ex-officio governor of Haughton School and has an observer role at Church Eaton.

Charitable Trusts: The Rector is a trustee of 3 local trusts. Bradley Trust has substantial landholdings in the parish, whose income is used to maintain the village hall, support the church and local schools and make educational grants. Church Eaton and Haughton have charitable trusts which distribute grants to those in need. The Rector is also a trustee of the Church Eaton Village Institute.

Mission Partnerships: There is regular giving to support mission from all churches.
LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

Lay Leadership: We have Worship Groups in each Parish who conduct the family services. Each parish also has a lay assistant and lay teams run the Sunday Schools.

Joint Working: The churchwardens, treasurers and Parish representatives (Section 11) from the 4 parishes meet regularly. All 4 parishes have a Mission Action Plan.

Safeguarding and faculty applications are carried out on a Benefice basis with a single point of contact. We are exploring other ways that we can share administration tasks across the Benefice.

Our service pattern is posted on the internet via “A Church Near You”.
Bradley is the smallest of the 4 benefice parishes with about 200 households spread over the village itself and outlying areas. We are very lucky to have a beautiful church, an attractive and well-used village hall and a great pub – the Red Lion. All of these serve as focal points for the village.

The Church, which is open daily, is a 13th century Grade 1 listed building with a well-preserved Norman font, mediaeval glass and a 17th century monument to Thomas Browne – a local worthy. It was restored about 10 years ago with grants from English Heritage and others totalling £300,000 – involving roof and wall repairs and restoration of the monument.

The village has been very active in the raising of funds to keep the Church well maintained and has always been able to make its full donation to the diocese by way of the Parish Share.

The PCC now consists of 7 members, most of whom are very new to the role, but currently has no churchwarden as this fell vacant during the summer of 2018. We are an energetic team who are working hard to maintain the smooth running of the church and its care and maintenance. We are forming a fund raising group from within the PCC and with members of the village to come up with a strategy for 2019.

During the autumn of 2018 many volunteers joined together to give the church its first real clean for seven years, we have had the windows cleaned – not done in recent memory - and are working hard at maintaining and improving our beautiful churchyard.

Our most popular service during the year is our “Carols by Candlelight” which is held on Christmas Eve and at which in 2018 there was standing room only.
Although the regular Sunday school closed a few years ago, we still try to engage our young people in the family services, and special events throughout the year including Christingle, Mothering Sunday, Good Friday Workshop and the annual Nativity Play.

Other highlights from 2018 include the benefice 4 parish fete, which was held in Bradley, and the Christmas tree festival in the Church – both of which raised much needed funds and were very much enjoyed by everyone who attended.

We acknowledge that we are not a wealthy parish and that a considerable amount of work lies ahead in 2019 to raise sufficient funds and also to involve more of the village in the life of the church. We are lucky to be supported with regular grants from the Bradley Trust and also from Bradley parish council.

In late 2018 we started a facebook page @StMaryandAllSaintsBradley to enable us to engage more with the local community.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming a new rector and helping them to settle in and enjoy their role in our beautiful village.
St. Editha’s and Church Eaton

Introduction
Although many parish profiles will appear to read the same, we hold to the firm belief that ours really should stand out for all the reasons demonstrated here. The PCC is a vibrant, clear thinking group of church leaders, youthful and forward looking in our outlook, always keen and anxious to reach out into our community, as evidenced in so many ways. Please read on...

Description
St Editha’s church is truly a pinnacle of our village, standing at the corner of the village where all routes converge. The church has been described as ‘our main evangelist’. Just gazing at the ancient and beautiful church building calls out its Christian message boldly into the community as everyone leaves and arrives back into the village. On Sundays and for special services our bells call us to worship, making the church visible even when it can’t be seen.

At night the building is bathed in soft warm lighting, a firm re-assurance that the church lives night and day. A period lantern over the gateway reminds us that the church has been here from time immemorial and will continue to be so. The lovingly cared for clock faithfully and reliably assures all who pass of the correct time in the day.

There are always comings and goings with cars outside, the cleaners, the gardeners, the flower arrangers, those setting up for services and events, those who attend to routine maintenance, and those who choose a quiet place to pray about something important in their lives. St Editha’s is a truly focal point of our historic village. We have a lot of visitors who are always complimentary that the church remains open and welcoming.

In the interests of expediency where four churches share one Rector the regular worship falls into a set pattern. There is always thought and conversation given to introduction of new services such as evensong, or compline, for which there is always warmth of feeling. We do seek to engage those who cannot be regular attenders at church for whatever reason but who still have spiritual needs which the church can fill.

640 people live here including the farms and small hamlets around and the social mix is very healthy. All manner of organisations co-exist here and there are always opportunities to meet with like-minded people. The village Institute is immediately opposite the church, itself a striking character double fronted Victorian building, restored to provide every modern amenity. The church and the Institute work very closely together often combining events and assisting each other in their own ventures and goals. The regular coffee mornings and village markets create a perfect mix of church-goers and others alike, in a truly well bonded society.
The village pub has a similar atmosphere, attracting a cross section of our village community. The pub hosts our annual Harvest Auction and supports a carol singing evening in the run up to Christmas. The “regulars” support our gardening team with a collection in lieu of Christmas cards each year. The Palm Sunday procession through the village with the donkey starts outside the pub.

New arrivals to the village receive a personal welcome and greeting and are given all they will need to know about the village organisations and the church itself, with the church assisting in distribution of the village information pack to newcomers.

People

There are always people in the church to fill all the essential roles, and always people willing to drop in to help whatever the need.

The church has staged some ambitious events, such as the Christmas tree festival, village history exhibition, flower festivals, a male voice choir, a brass band concert, an opera event and village fete concerts with volunteers always on hand offering their time to ensure an excellent show. We also host an annual fundraising event for Macmillan Nurses.

The PCC is nine people strong and comprises well qualified, energetic and committed minds covering all aspects of what a church needs. New ideas are ever present and the Mission side of the church is strong. We attend “Church in the Community” training sessions, are stimulated by new opportunities and seek to implement them as our strengths and resources allow.

“20 is Plenty” has been our latest and extremely successful venture where we have a regular “core” of children from the local school attending after lessons for 20 minutes to hear a bible story, sing songs, create craft items and displays and enjoy cake and a drink and a good social time together. We are delighted to see this initiative is firmly established, a very important part of our church life, succeeding the earlier Sunday School. We are thrilled that several confirmation candidates have come forward from this group.

The creative Worship Group leads a very popular service once a month and forms an extremely resourceful group of creative Christians in the church. “In teaching we learn” and how true this is of this group.

We have always enjoyed strong leadership in our church wardens, each having different strengths the combination of which caters for every need of the church. This leadership is one significant hallmark of our church from which we observe all our energies flow.

In recent years our congregation is visibly growing, recognising that in years gone by a lot of now regular faces had simply never been seen before in the church. This is testament to the warmth and comfort that our Christian church brings to its village people.

Our church community is recognised and acknowledged as being the finest, warmest and most welcoming organisation in our village, a recognition that we should of course have, but nevertheless of which we are proud.
Any successful organisation should have its finances in order and St Editha’s does. The financial support from its own members is augmented by many in the village who don’t attend regularly but still believe in supporting our church by regular giving. The establishment of the church is important enough for the life of this village for them to care about it in this way. Specific fundraising events are staged when deemed to be necessary and the finances are watched carefully, but it is rewarding to feel this matter is well managed within the PCC.

**Policies**

Policies are updated and implemented where necessary, particularly in the area of Safeguarding.

**Mission Action Plan**

The desire to ‘spread the Christian word’ is felt in different degrees across our community—a quite natural situation for a village to be in. Those more active are already extremely effective in helping families and friends with visits and support in whatever form it is needed and as far as they are able. Often this is on a simple one on one basis through Christian friendships in the village. Many people feel that a visit from the village Rector is what is lacking, at times, and we are looking for a someone who can fulfil just that role. A member of the PCC just doesn’t have quite the same impact. We want our new incumbent to be able to give time to what we feel is an important role. We know, and can advise, who would appreciate such visits.

There is always more that can be done, and those more active members will attend forums, symposiums, deanery meetings etc to learn what other steps might still be taken to “spread the word” and enrich the life of our church in our community. Reports are fed back to the PCC for consideration and action as appropriate within our capability.

Part of our outreach involves using the church for events other than just worship and over several years we have held concerts and performances to raise funds, not only for the work of the church, but also for other charities and organisations.

**Work**

There are organisations in the village on which our Rector is invited to sit in an observing role rather than a demanding active role. The Rector is asked to support the school, the Village Institute and the Church Eaton Charities.

Our Mission Action Plan and preparation is at an advanced stage where we look now for our new spiritual leader to begin to work with us, to assist and help us to develop our work, while the members undertake all the roles that will be required of them. There is so much that already goes on but there are other avenues of opportunity awaiting us.
Our work with the school has been exemplary, as evidenced by “20 is Plenty” and much has come out of this. The school always looks for opportunities to work with us and the relationship with the church is healthy and active. The school plans a number of services in church which are appropriate to the time of year, for example Easter, Harvest and Advent.

Lent is a time when those who are able can really consider the Bible in some depth, along with members from other parishes in the benefice, and some feel activity like this should be carried over for other parts of the year. Bible Study groups have been active in the Benefice in the past but not recently. We appreciate that regular meetings are time consuming in a busy life, but for some sections of the community they would be a blessing and a great support.

Our outlook for the future of our church is always positive because we feel the strength that we have now will carry us through. As we see new faces in our congregations we believe there will always be people to carry the work forward, following the examples we have set, so the limitations of an ageing congregation will be overcome in its due time.
Derrington is a vibrant and attractive Village, that lies about 3 miles west of the County Town of Stafford, has a rural character surrounded by countryside and agricultural land. There are about 320 properties with a population of approximately 720. Stafford has major road and rail networks, a county hospital and local hospice. It also boasts a theatre, two cinemas, leisure centre, a number of gyms and Stafford Castle, where a number of events are held each year including an open-air Shakespeare production each summer.

Derrington has a Victorian Church, a ‘Millennium Green’ – created in the year 2000, a disused railway track – known as ‘The Greenway’- and a new plantation, also created in the year 2000, called 'Duddas Wood' which was planted by public subscription. This is popular with many local environmentalists and walkers of all ages.

In 2009 the Derrington – Way Ahead community project was launched with the aim of promoting and supporting more sustainable lifestyles in the Village. Since then many projects have been undertaken, one of them being the creation of a Village Trail. This has ten themed Interpretation Panels place around the Village, all with a sustainability message threaded into them.

It has a lively community life, with a large well-equipped village hall, which is well-used by a variety of local groups including Brownies, Guides, Art Classes, Indoor Bowls, Keep Fit and an active W.I. The village hall hosts a variety of different social events including monthly film nights. The village hall is also home to the village social club. Derrington Social Club is a thriving village club founded in 1982. The club can boast a large number of members in all age ranges. The club is extremely friendly, and runs regular events, which are always very well supported.

The village has a part-time post office three mornings a week in the village hall, supplemented by a café organised by the W.I. where you can also enjoy a nice cup of tea or coffee, a slice of cake and a chat.

Each summer the village hosts a summer fete on the field next to the church that is well attended by the local and wider community.
In November each year the Church holds a Christmas Bazaar, which is also very popular and well supported by the community.

St. Matthew’s church was built in 1847 and is the newest of the four church buildings in the benefice. There is a regular Sunday service every week and on a Tuesday evening the church is open for evening prayers. During the summer months the church is open on Wednesday afternoons from 2.20 pm to 4 pm for visitors, which is frequented by local walking groups.

We have a dedicated PCC who are good at communications as we follow up the Parish Magazine with regular ‘house-drops’ to keep everyone in the community aware of what is going on. It has been this regular contact which enabled the PCC to invest nearly £120,000 over the last 10 years in re-roofing the church, completely re-wiring and installing a new lighting system, upgrading the heating, replacing the carpet, adding a bespoke built-in cupboard, renewing the tarmac in the car park, replacing the church organ and other smaller projects. Thanks to a very supportive community most of these costs have been funded from our reserves.

Plans are in place for disabled toilets and a welcome area.

The 2018 Accounts show total receipts of £27,000, payments of £19,100 resulting in a surplus of £7,900 and giving reserves of £31,100 at the end of 2018. Within those figures, Planned Giving amounted to £15,000, which more than covered the Parish Share payment of £14,200, which has always been paid in full each year. This financial trend has continued for some years, putting the church on a sound financial footing. Planned Giving income has shown a steady increase over the last few years.
We have an excellent website which is maintained by the Parish Council and which provides valuable information about the parish.

www.haughton-staffs.org.uk

The village of Haughton lies 4 miles west of Stafford along the A 518, on a main bus route from Stafford to Newport and Telford in Shropshire. The population of approximately is a mixture of old-established families and newcomers to the area. The village has a thriving community, which actively supports the varied social and educational activities, which along with church events, are held in the village hall.

The village supports the Best Kept Village initiative and has won numerous awards over the past few years. The local shops include a Post Office and we have 2 public houses. A special feature of Haughton is its ‘Christmas Illuminations’ when many of the houses in the village decorate their houses and gardens with Christmas lights and the church cross is floodlit. This attracts visitors from a wide area and enables considerable contributions to be made to local charities. The church has a service each Sunday, led once a month by the local Worship Group. There is also a Sunday School in term time.

There is a committed and active PCC, which meets regularly and makes a valuable contribution to the parish. Our Mission Statement forms the basis of what we are seeking to achieve as a church.

St Giles is Grade 11* listed and was built mainly in the 15th and early 16th century. However, there is a much longer history of Christian work in the parish. We have a regular organist and a small and enthusiastic choir, as well as a thriving bell-ringing team.
We have 56 on the Electoral Roll.
The churchyard is maintained with financial support from the Parish Council and is open for burials.
The Parish Share has been paid up to date.

**THE RECTORY**
This is situated close to St. Giles Church in the village of Haughton and is within 2/3 miles of the other churches in the benefice.
The house was built in 1958/59 and has gas central heating and new PVC windows. A new kitchen and bathroom have recently been installed.
The ground floor accommodation includes a porch leading to the hallway and cloakroom, a lounge leading into a small conservatory, a dining room, study, kitchen and utility area.
On the first floor there are 4 bedrooms and a large family bathroom. Outside there is a single garage with ample parking space in the grounds. The rectory is surrounded by a large, mature garden.

The Rectory has recently undergone extensive works commissioned by the Diocese to bring the house up to current standards. The gardens have been maintained during the interregnum by the PCC’s.