



Ministry on
the Border

- a place of
opportunity
and
surprises



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Forest Church, Morton



After Morning Worship (Trefonen)

An invitation from the Bishop of Lichfield

Cradled at the intersection of the Midlands and the North, and the interface between England and Wales, the Diocese of Lichfield is the ancient centre of Christianity in what was the Kingdom of Mercia.

St Chad, Lichfield's first Bishop, journeyed around Mercia with heavenly hope and the good news of Christ's resurrection. He believed that there was 'a new opening for the gospel' in Mercia. Many people became followers of Jesus.



Accounts of the apostles' journeys, as they travelled in the power of the Spirit, with little other than the stories of Christ's life, crucifixion and resurrection, were Chad's only companions. His plan to walk Mercia was as daring in its simplicity and boldness as God trusting the gospel first to the shepherds and then to just twelve apostles.

Chad set out believing that he would bear fruit, and that the kingdom of God would grow. Bede describes Chad as 'humble, devout, zealous and apostolic'.

Today, in our much more complex world, I recognise a similar opening for the Gospel in these parts and I invite you to join with me in seizing this opportunity to follow Christ in the humble, devout, zealous and apostolic footsteps of St Chad.

Over the centuries, we have become immersed in Chad's legacy - as we are immersed in Christ at baptism. Chad's church of ordinary Mercian people became a growing community of Christian faith through the example of Chad's pilgrim life and ministry pointing to Jesus. This must have encouraged him in his arduous and sacrificial journey for the sake of the gospel. To truly follow Christ in Chad's footsteps today, we must be committed to this life and ministry. **This is zealous.**

Chad's legacy of a vibrant community of faith leads us today to charge our clergy with nurturing, outside weekly worship, confident knowledge of the faith handed down to us. Such faith is characterised by a readiness in each member of our worshipping communities to speak about what Jesus Christ means in their lives and how they are being shaped by him. Doing this, we will recognise and rejoice in the gifts of all those, lay and ordained, who contribute to the life and ministry of our churches. **This is apostolic.**

Our clergy should take responsibility for their own flourishing and effectiveness, supported by the wellbeing and learning programmes in development and through prioritising participation in peer support and review. Chad would have been spurred on seeing God's unfolding plan in Mercia, just as the flourishing of the gifts of all God's people can contribute to our clergy's human flourishing and effectiveness as ministers. **This is humble.**

Together, as the Body of Christ in this place, reflecting Chad's legacy in giving priority to purposeful evangelism, creative engagement with local communities, and to becoming more diverse and growing younger, our trajectory is given full expression in our diocesan strategy, 'Seeking the Kingdom'. It is a manifesto for what I invite us by God's grace to achieve as a diocese.

If we are to truly to follow in Chad's footsteps together, we will go forward with his devotion to prayer. So doing, we will go believing that God will be faithful and will build his kingdom. **This is devout.**

Our journey together begins with our vision prayer:

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find you, O God already at work in your world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

+Michael

Welcome from the Bishop of Shrewsbury and the Archdeacon of Salop



We're delighted that you're looking at this post, as Rector of Llanyblodwel, Llanymynech, Morton and Trefonen – the Border Benefice. We pray that God will give you a clear sense of whether he might be calling you to serve in this role. Should you join us here, we look forward to working with you in God's service!



In Lichfield diocese, much of our shared life, leadership and mutual support is lived out through episcopal areas, so we would expect to get to know you and to encourage you in your ministry and mission here. We have much to do in God's service, and a wonderful area in which to serve him together.

The Shrewsbury Episcopal Area (which covers the same area as the Archdeaconry of Salop) covers a large area and many communities across North Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, and in this benefice and one other crosses over into the Welsh county of Powys. Reaching from here to the Cheshire border in the north, the edges of the Shropshire Hills (and the Diocese of Hereford) in the south, and the outskirts of Wolverhampton in the east, it includes churches of all sizes, traditions and history. Mostly rural, we also serve the ancient town of Shrewsbury, fast-growing Telford, and a number of substantial market towns such as Oswestry, *Seeking the Kingdom* of the one God whose love is constant in all places.

This post will give the new Rector rich opportunities to develop mission and ministry in an area deeply influenced by the spirituality of the borderland. The beauty and varied landscape of the area is a huge bonus, of course; but the variety and spirit of the church communities and of their buildings is what will give this role its potential. The four parishes are already established and working well as a united benefice, and are committed to working together for the Kingdom of God across the area. During the current vacancy they have continued to see growth, and have taken new initiatives to develop their life and mission, some of which you'll read about in this profile.

We hope that this profile gives you enough insight into the Border Benefice and the role of its Rector to discern with God whether or not to apply. If you'd like to know more before deciding, please contact Archdeacon Nick on 07506 748 702 or at archdeacon.salop@lichfield.anglican.org.

Thank you.

+Sarah and Archdeacon Nick

Welcome to the Border Group of Parishes



What and Where We Are

What We Are

We are a benefice of four parishes located in the beautiful countryside where England meets Wales, in the north-west corner of Shropshire. Our churches are:

- **St Michael the Archangel** - Llanyblodwel
- **St Agatha** - Llanymynech
- **St Philip and St James** - Morton
- **All Saints** - Trefonen

We came together nearly 20 years ago and chose the name **Border Group of Parishes** to reflect our location, mostly in Shropshire, but partly in Powys, Wales. We are part of and sit at the very western edge of the **Diocese of Lichfield**, in the **Oswestry Deanery**.

Where We Are

- **Llanyblodwel**, **Trefonen**, and **Morton** are all in England.
- **Llanymynech** is split between England and Wales; even the churchyard is half in each country!

Here are the population sizes (2021 Census):

- Llanymynech: 1,983
- Trefonen: 1,392
- Morton: 1,032
- Llanyblodwel: 665

Our Landscape

Shropshire is renowned for being the most complex geological area of Europe and our landscape reflects that:

- **Morton** lies on the edge of the North Shropshire plain.
- **Part of Llanymynech** sits near the River Vyrnwy.
- The middle of our area has hills and ridges, ending in spectacular cliffs at **Llanymynech Rocks**.
- To the west lie the Welsh hills.
- **Offa's Dyke** and its long-distance walking trail pass through our area, attracting many visitors.



Local Interest and Activities



There are many historical and natural sites to explore:

Old canals, quarries, coal mines, lime kilns, water mills, and disused railways.

The restored **Hoffman Lime Kiln** in Llanymynech.

Several **SSSIs** (protected nature sites), woodlands and rich wildlife.

Here you can enjoy walking, golf, boating, canoeing, and other countryside activities.

About the Role and What We Offer

We are seeking a full-time priest to serve across the four parishes.

The Rectory is located in Pant, tucked away in a quiet cul-de-sac, yet still centrally positioned. The village offers a welcoming Church of England primary school, a general store, a community hall, a pub, and a small play area.

Built in the 1950s, the Rectory is an attractive and spacious family home. The sitting room and kitchen (which includes a useful pantry) are bright and overlook the rear garden. At the front of the house, the dining room and study/office enjoy the evening sun. There's also a downstairs cloakroom.

Upstairs, the home feels light and airy, with four bedrooms, a separate bathroom, and a WC. The views across Shropshire from the upper floor are truly stunning (see photo below!). A new central heating system has recently been installed.

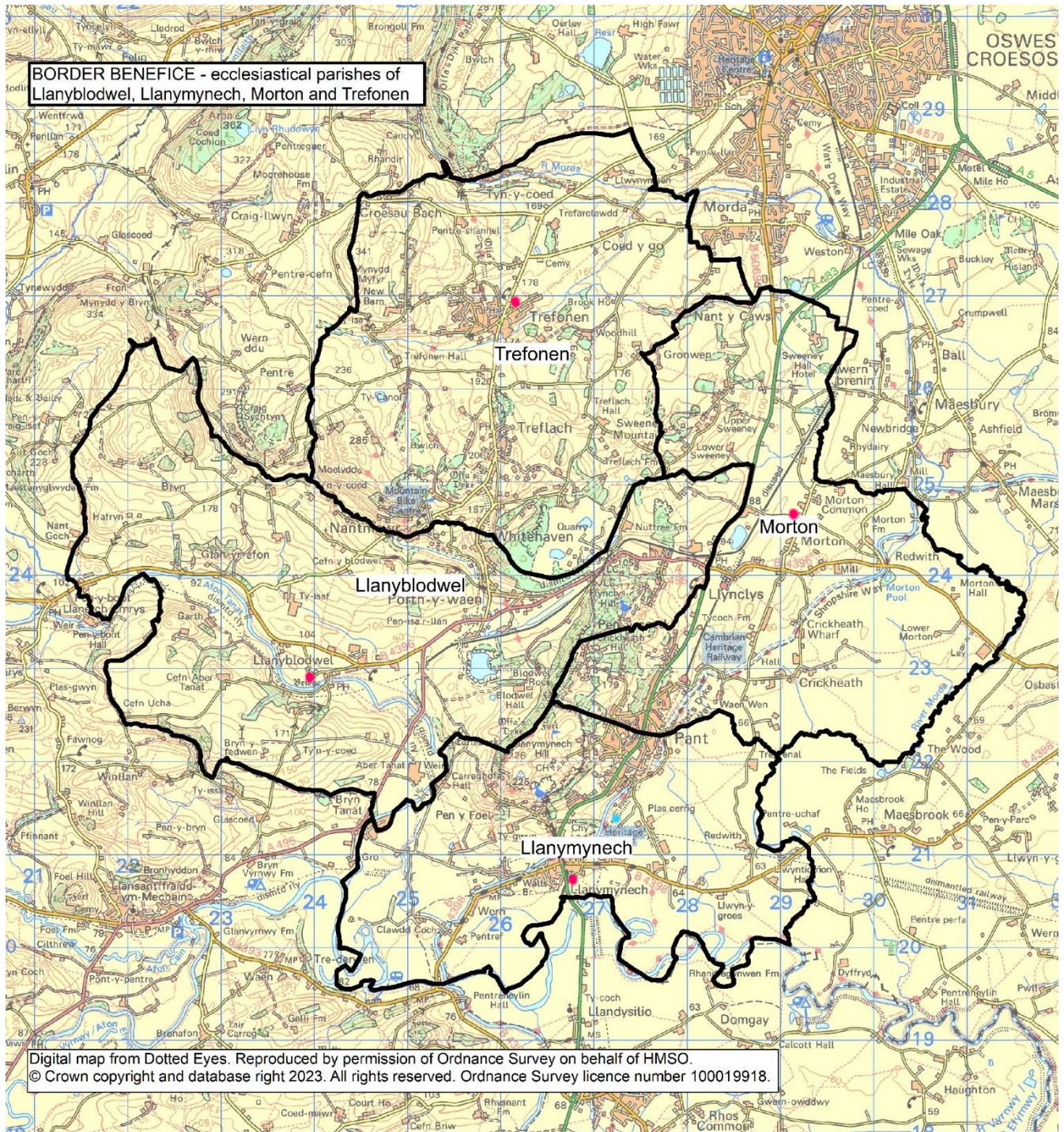


The garden is mostly lawn. It has been used to host Benefice events and summer services, but this is not taken for granted for the future. It can be kept as it is or adapted by a keen gardener to include fruit, vegetables or flower beds. At the far end of the garden, there's an orchard/paddock.



Support and Benefits

- We provide financial support for an annual retreat.
- You are encouraged to take all your days off and full annual leave, in line with diocesan guidelines.
- Parish expenses will be fully reimbursed according to national guidelines.
- A Benefice Administrator works 15 hours per week to support you.
- We will support you with ongoing prayer and pastoral care.



• Churches • Rectory

The Parishes Working Together

This Benefice Profile shows the diversity of our churches and communities—their locations, traditions, and worship styles. While it's not always easy to bring together rural parishes, there is a real sense of our *unity in diversity*.

Worship Across the Benefice

We're fortunate to have:

- **2 lay readers** serving across the Benefice
- **9 lay worship leaders**

They currently lead all Sunday services except Holy Communion

Worship styles vary, but we use a shared set of service booklets based on *Common Worship*. Some leaders also create their own *Services of the Word*. We have separate booklets for Holy Communion, including seasonal versions. There is occasional use of *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) services. There are a variety of approaches to all-age worship, with a **Sunday service in each of the four churches**, except on fifth Sundays, when we hold a **joint Benefice Service**, rotating between churches and with different themes.



2024 Statistics for Mission

Parish	Electoral Roll	USA adult	USA <16	Easter	Christmas	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
Llanyblodwel	47	15	0	24	22	0	1	1
Llanymynech	46	16	0	11	70	4	1	9
Morton	60	17	2	49	53	2	0	5
Trefonen	44	23	0	28	90	3	0	10

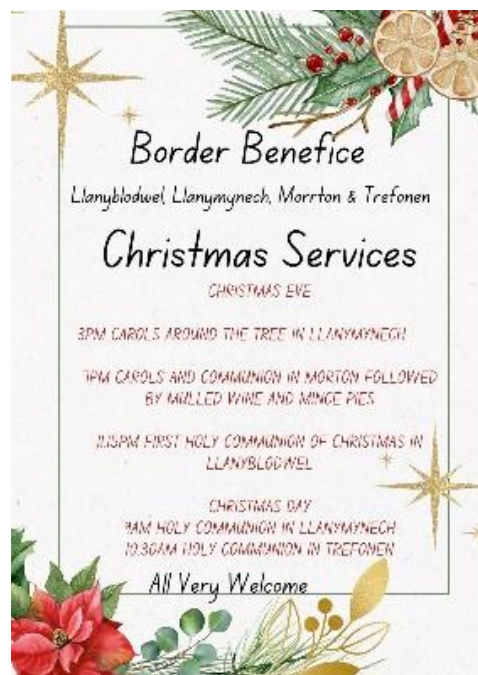
Working Together in Practice

- **Churchwardens** from all four parishes meet regularly to discuss shared matters.
- **The part-time Benefice Administrator** works from home and, currently, at the Parish Office in All Saints', Trefonen. She handles all enquiries for baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
- Each parish has its own treasurer, and there is also a **Benefice Treasurer**. All parishes are financially self-sufficient and contribute to the **Diocesan Common Fund**.
- Each parish has a safeguarding officer and has adopted all the relevant policies.

Growing Through the Vacancy

The parishes and Benefice have grown through the vacancy:

- From the outset PCC Chairs studied and shared the main ideas in 'Growing Through a Vacancy' by Bob Jackson. PCC discussions have provoked reflection and Chairs are sharing ideas about 'Seeking the Kingdom'.
- Sunday worship has been strengthened by the worship leaders sharing ideas, both formally and informally, and by the range of material provided.
- A Benefice weekly Lent course was led by four worship leaders.
- Above all, there is increased activity across the parish boundaries. Officers contact one another frequently and share Benefice responsibilities. People support events in parishes other than their own.
- In July we held a Benefice wide Prayer Day led by our lay readers, with 30-minute slots from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., as we asked God for guidance and share with Him our yearning for a new incumbent.



Explore more:

 www.borderparishes.org.uk

 Or take a virtual tour on Google Earth!

The Challenges: Working in the Power of the Spirit



For over a decade, the churches in our Benefice have been learning to grow and work together. There is a shared commitment to developing a strong Benefice identity, one that thrives and becomes a powerful force for good. At the same time, we fully recognise and value the individuality of the parishes, each with its own long-standing traditions, activities and Parochial Church Council (PCC).

A Shared Vision: Reaching Children and Young People

A recurring theme in parish discussions is the heartfelt desire to build stronger connections with children and young people. Importantly, we are moving beyond simply counting attendance at Sunday services. We recognise the need to engage beyond the church walls.





July 25 leavers with their books

offering us a valuable opportunity to connect with younger adults. These are largely untapped opportunities.

Looking Outward: Engaging with Our Communities

Another shared concern across the parishes is the desire to reach out more actively to our local communities both within our villages and in collaboration with other worship and faith groups.

Our rural setting places us in the heart of vibrant, caring, and active communities. People know and support one another, and church members are often deeply involved in local life. The sick, bereaved, housebound, and those facing challenges are not left without care or companionship.

However, there is a growing sense that we are not fully bringing Christ's presence into these relationships. As the only church buildings in many of our villages, we also welcome active members from non-Anglican backgrounds. This diversity is a strength, and we believe we should be more outward-looking, strengthening our ties with the Deanery and Churches Together.



Planting and maintenance

Our Christian witness

We are strongly committed to developing our Christian understanding and witness beyond our Sunday worship. We already have a variety of ways of doing this: house and home groups, occasional services and discussion, specific courses, prayer groups.

PCC consideration of the Diocese's *Seeking the Kingdom - A Strategic Framework 2024 – 2030* has provoked much discussion and reflection and even some agreement about priorities and possibilities! We can see both the challenge and the potential in the direction of travel outlined. However, we know that little will really happen without leadership, drive and probably the occasional smile and laugh.



Benefice Lent Lunch

Communication in a rural area



While our rural situation brings huge benefits, it also presents some challenges. Importantly we need to give more thought to communication, in its various forms.

Physical contact between the churches, or even getting to a parish church, is frequently a problem. Public transport is very poor and people depend on cars and lifts. This constitutes a real barrier to participation in worship, encounter and activity.

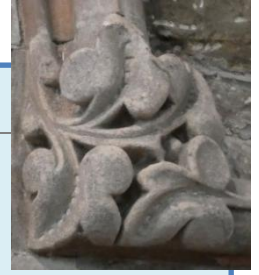
In addition, keeping people informed, and ensuring information is delivered in a timely manner, does not work if there is too much reliance on the Internet. Significant numbers of our congregations do not have access to IT or are hesitant to use it. The three parish magazines play an important role.

Addressing these issues is important.



A Harvest lunch for the village

In order to tackle these challenges, we need someone to:



Feed and lead the flock

Tell

- Guide our PCCs as they develop the Diocesan Mission Strategy.
- Get to know key people in our primary schools and expect to be involved in the governance of Church Controlled schools.
- Spot opportunities for growth and people to be developed, and help us plan how to make that happen.

Teach

- Focus on spiritual growth and create plans for meaningful and varied activities.
- Encourage the creation of house groups and opportunities where people can explore faith in a safe, welcoming space.
- Continue the development of different forms of worship and liturgy that encourage participation and reflect our diverse congregations.

Tend

- Build and support teams for different tasks, making sure people are trained and clear on their roles. Ensure ongoing review and support, particularly of lay worship leaders.
- Oversee safeguarding, working closely with our Safeguarding Officers.
- Connect with local community groups and build relationships across the parishes.

Transform

- Help church members grow in prayer and reflection, and become active in outreach and as agents for change
- Encourage efforts to promote peace and challenge violence.

Treasure

- Promote our commitment to being Eco Friendly churches.
- Explore ways to safeguard the integrity of creation and protect the environment
- Help us celebrate our beautiful surroundings.





On the Moelydd

And in order to lead and feed the flock we need:

A good shepherd

If you feel drawn to our rural parishes, then we would love to meet you. We know that incumbents are never short of work; you have entered a demanding calling. Having four parishes will ensure you will have variety in approach, activity and ideas! However, we feel the following are particularly important:



- being engaged and active beyond the four walls of the churches
- planting ideas and guiding us in their development and implementation
- preaching engagingly to a variety of congregations and age groups
- handling change and challenge in a tactful and Christian manner and being a good listener
- identifying people's potential and developing teams
- being organised, managing your time and identifying priorities to cope with your workload
- managing a regular pattern of rest and accessing appropriate personal and spiritual support
- and sharing laughter with us!

Our parishes

Llanyblodwel: St Michael the Archangel

Nestled in the lower reaches of the Tanat Valley, between the ancient boundary of Offa's Dyke and the Welsh border, lies the parish of Llanyblodwel—a place where history and community spirit are woven into the very fabric of daily life. Located just six miles south of Oswestry in Shropshire, our rural parish encompasses within the main village of Llanyblodwel the hamlets of Abertanat, Bryn, Llynclys, and Porth-y-Waen.

Despite its scattered geography, Llanyblodwel had maintained a stable population of around 800 for over two centuries. Today, the community thrives on a blend of tradition and modernity, with agriculture still central to its economy, complemented by residents who commute to nearby towns for work.

A Community with Deep Roots

Llanyblodwel's history is steeped in agriculture and quarrying, industries that once defined the local economy. While quarrying has largely declined, farming remains a vital part of life. The modern village hall serves as a hub for social events, and the Porth-y-Waen Silver Band, based in its own purpose-built hall, continues to be a source of local pride and musical excellence.

The Horseshoe Inn, dating back to the 15th century, remained a popular gathering place until Covid, while other pubs in Llynclys and Porth-y-Waen contribute to the area's social life.

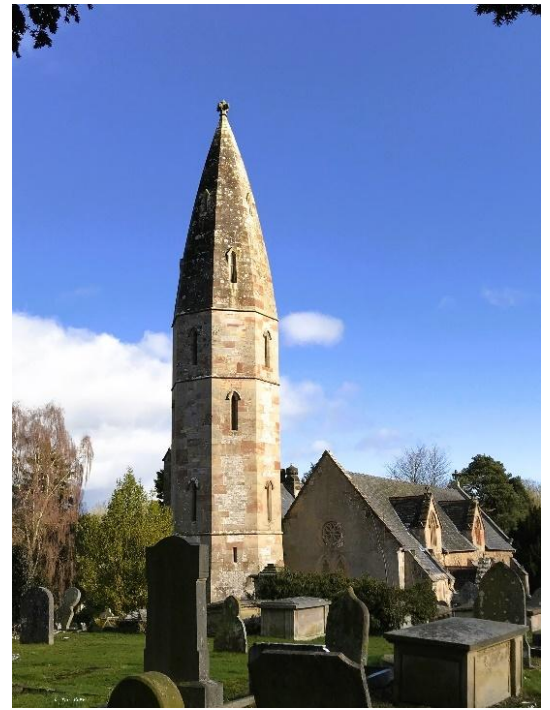
St Michael's Church: A Sacred Landmark

At the heart of the village stands the Church of St Michael the Archangel, one of the most distinctive and historically significant churches in the region. The site has been sacred for over 1,700 years, with the current structure dating back to circa 1160 AD, built in the Norman style. Additions in the 15th century expanded the church, but its most striking transformation came in the mid-19th century.



Between 1846 and 1855, the church was extensively redeveloped by the Reverend John Parker, a polymath who was not only a clergyman but also an artist, botanist, engineer, and amateur architect. Inspired by his travels, Parker designed the church's octagonal tower and conical spire, modelled after Freiburg Minster in southern Germany. Parker also built a vicarage, school, and schoolhouse in a matching Gothic style, leaving a lasting architectural legacy.

Thanks to the efforts of the PCC and the wider community, over £300,000 has been raised since 2009 for restoration and improvements. These include re-roofing, structural repairs, and the addition of modern amenities such as a kitchen and accessible toilet. The church remains a place of worship, reflection, and community pride.



Worship and Spiritual Life



St Michael's offers a rich and inclusive pattern of worship:

- 3rd Sunday: 11:00 AM Communion
- Other Sundays: 11:00 AM Common Worship
- Fifth Sundays: Benefice service
- Until the vacancy, a second monthly Communion using the 1662 BCP.

The church is supported by two lay readers, worship leaders and active participation from the congregation. The setting and ambiance make it ideal for private prayer and meditation. There is a regular monthly prayer group.

The church has an occasional choir which leads a carol service each year and comes together for other important services and feast days.

Recent Church Community Events and Activities

Llanyblodwel's community life is vibrant and inclusive, with a calendar full of events that bring people together. In 2024 and 2025, notable church events included:

- Café Blodwel, the monthly community café, a popular gathering spot for residents of all ages, offering home-made cakes, tea, and conversation.
- The First Friday Talks series featuring speakers on topics ranging from local history and wildlife conservation to flying training and bronze casting, promoting "knowledge, conversation, and mingling".
- A Spring Quiz Night in April 2025 which drew a record crowd to the village hall, raising funds for church maintenance.



- The Harvest Supper in October 2024, a sell-out event, featuring local produce and a raffle raising funds for the church.
- A Sponsored Walk along the Tanat Valley in July 2025 which raised £2,000 for church running costs.
- The Christmas Sale and Dinner Evening in December 2024 bringing festive cheer, with handmade crafts, mulled wine, and carols.
- A Fashion Show which raised close to a £1000 to help maintain the church.

The Village Hall also organizes events:

- Music nights, including jazz and ceilidhs.
- Comedy Shows.
- Yoga and keep-fit.
- Barbecues and fetes marking national events.

Other activities include:

- The Tanat Investment Club and Upper Tanat Fishing Club continue to meet regularly, offering residents opportunities to engage in shared interests.
- Efforts are underway to re-establish the Women's Institute, which was active until the pandemic, with a relaunch meeting planned for autumn 2025.

These events not only raise funds but also strengthen the bonds between residents, reinforcing the village's identity as a place of warmth and welcome.



A Name with a Legacy: John of Blodwel

The name Llanyblodwel is associated with John of Blodwel, a historical figure of significance. Born in the parish in 1380, John was educated in the University of Bologna speaking five languages, English, Welsh, Latin, French and Italian. John was given a position in the Vatican dealing with diplomatic correspondence and was appointed as a member of a commission to the Council of Constance, called in 1414. John returned to England holding the positions of canon in the cathedrals of Hereford, Lichfield, Wells and St David's, as Proctor of Durham and Dean of St Asaph. He later took up the living of the parish church of Balsham in Cambridgeshire remaining there until his death on 16th April 1462 and where he is commemorated by a fine brass.

Looking to the Future

Llanyblodwel is not just a village of the past—it is a community with a clear vision for the future. The Parish Council remains active in local governance, and residents are engaged in discussions about sustainability, infrastructure, and preserving the natural beauty of the Tanat Valley.

Conclusion

Llanyblodwel is a village where history, community, and culture come together in harmony. From its ancient church and architectural marvels to its lively events and enduring traditions, it offers a rich and rewarding experience for residents and visitors alike.

Whether you're drawn by the peaceful countryside, the vibrant community life, or the echoes of history in every stone, Llanyblodwel welcomes you with open arms—and a strong cup of tea at Café Blodwel.

Llanymynech: St Agatha's

It's the best church community I've ever been a part of, the congregation, the churchwardens and the church leaders, such friendly people. It's the most inclusive church I've ever been part of, nobody gets left out. Each one of you should all be very proud ...and I mean that wholeheartedly
(Message received July 2025)



Our situation

We are a parish divided by the Welsh border which even splits our churchyard! Their cross-border situation is culturally important to the self-image of the three parish communities: Llanymynech, Pant and Carreghofa. We have learned to work positively together even when enduring very divisive lockdown rules during Covid. In the last fifteen years, five new developments have been added to the village. Another large one is planned. Some of the villagers were born here but the new housing has brought in commuters, with roots elsewhere, who work in



places like Shrewsbury. This has also brought in more families. At present, the church has not succeeded in reflecting this in the make-up of its regular congregations. The Montgomery Canal is being restored and work has reached the part running through the village. This will bring economic benefits.

Working with the community

Many locals feel connected to but are not regular members of the church. We are involved in village activities and the village shows affection for its church by supporting us. Recently a Facebook group has been active in supporting Church events and giving practical help with maintenance, floral arrangements and cleaning. Our Crib service last Christmas, however, saw a congregation of over 150 with families well-represented. Guides and Brownies attend special occasions as unofficial groups.

The Nursery School and two Primary Schools take turns to decorate the church for festivals. A new venture in hand will see improvements in the children's area with art work as well as screens to hold displays of religious work done in the schools and Nursery.



Our worship and services

Our congregation is made up of friends who work well together. We regret the absence of families at our Sunday services but try to reach out to them in other ways. We have had some new worshippers joining us and would like to build our middle-aged and early retired members further - as well as the missing families. We lack small group meetings which might encourage newcomers more. In our services, we enjoy learning more about our faith, particularly when themes are developed through stories and points explored through examples we can relate to.



Several members of the congregation meet with other Christians for Compline on Zoom every Sunday. This is very important to them and has run regularly since the start of lockdown.

Many of us can testify to the warm welcome received by visitors to the church. After the service on the first Sunday of the month, we meet together for tea and biscuits in our well-used hall adjacent to the Church which has recently been

extended and has a good modern, well-equipped kitchen. It is popular for social events and regular meetings for groups of all ages.



In Church there is a PA system and also an OHP facility which is not often used -so our range of hymns is limited. It lacks only a purpose and some good, enthusiastic instruction. There are booklets for all the seasons. We have a regular organist, with a well-maintained organ. Two members of the congregation are able to act as Worship Leaders and two as Altar Servers and there is a Sacristan. We share Benefice Lay Readers when needed.

The closed churchyards, vested in the Local Authority, are well maintained and the L.A. cemetery is very close by.

Relationships with two primary schools

Bryn Offa, the English Church-Aided School, is in Pant, and there is also the Primary School in Carreghofa on the Welsh side. Bryn Offa is further from the church building so its children must cross a busy road and walk a long way. Our recent incumbent has worked well with the schools over the last ten years. What is needed now is a successor to build on these foundations. Secondary children commute to English and Welsh schools outside the village, all of which have good reputations.

A group chosen from various classes from Carreghofa school attend the Community Cafe. They mingle with the diners, practising their social skills and sometimes are more actively involved even cooking the meal one month! Church members and other local people organise the Cafe in the Church Hall, providing the lunch and entertainment. Numbers vary from thirty to fifty people. It has already brought some disabled and other isolated people more into the village and Church community.

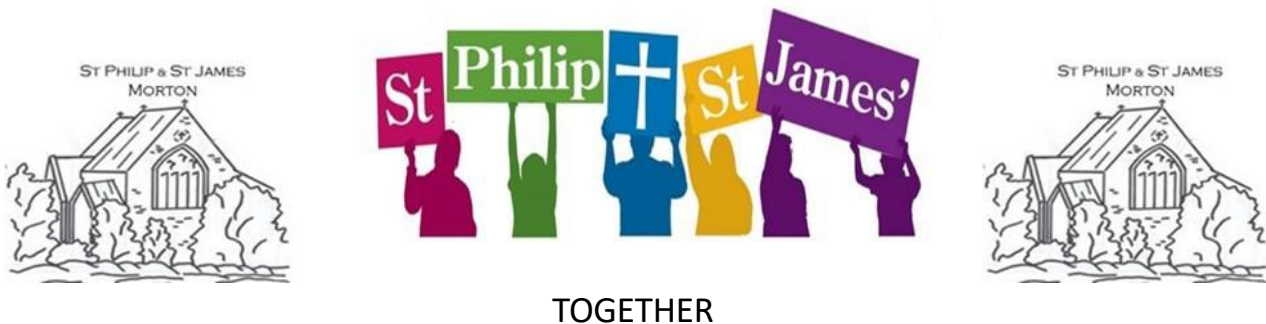


The environment and heritage

To the north, the parish runs along the busy and narrow A483 into Pant. Here ribbon development has extended on both sides gradually merging into the village of Morton and its parish. Over the last few years a "Partnership" between the two Councils and other local organisations has revived and improved the built and natural environment with the aim of economic regeneration. This included the Heritage Area with the impressive Hoffmann Kiln, an important industrial-archaeological site. Above the villages, towers Llanymynech Hill, an SSSI.



The Parish of Morton



Our Church and its community have committed to our shared vision: Committed to Growth; Rooted in Jesus; Fruitful in Mission and Service.

The Church of St Philip and St James'

There has been a place of worship on the site since 1685. The present Church was built of locally quarried stone in 1873, through the generosity of local benefactors. Some families still have a relationship with the Church. A fine 'Hill Organ' was gifted at the time of the Church's completion. Morton church has an association with HMS Manchester; its standard was presented to the church upon the disbanding of the ship's Assoc. In the Churchyard, there are several Commonwealth War Graves.

The Bell from the original church was saved and rehung in the new building. However, it became unsafe over the years, and in 2018, it was completely refurbished and rings out daily.

Our Church building is in good order and a team of volunteers support the Churchwardens in their duties of care for the Church and its grounds. There is a PA loop system. The Church's interior is inviting, light, and airy and there are two fine stained-glass windows in the East and the North. There have been recent renovations to the boundary wall and spaces set aside for planting and reflection. The Church was awarded Silver Eco Status in 2022; we are now committed to uphold our Eco principles, always looking for ways to improve.



Prayer Walk

Our Community

The Church lies at the geographical centre of the Parish in the hamlet of Morton. There are two other hamlets (Crickheath and Sweeney) which are distinct from the larger settlement of Pant, which is within the Parish boundary. Pant has a range of amenities including a shop and a Memorial Hall which we use for our monthly outreach activities. Local children attend the Bryn Offa School in Pant and then have a choice to transfer to secondary school at either The Marches Academy School in Oswestry or Llanfyllin High School.

The Churchwardens are Trustees of Morton Village playing fields and successful fundraising events have been held there. A spur of the Shropshire Union Canal passes through the Parish and has been subject to significant restoration to open the canal to Newtown in Powys fully.

There is also a heritage railway in the Parish which is open in summer and at weekends. The population in the Parish works both locally and further afield. It is an area rich with agricultural tradition

and several farms have been in the same family for generations. As with many Border communities, there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit and there has been significant growth in the area as a whole over the last twenty years.

Our worship

Worship and prayer play a central role in our spiritual lives here in Morton. This is demonstrated in our worship every Sunday morning, and our occasional Evensong services. The Eucharist is our main service and follows the Common Worship. Vestments are worn in our church.

An outreach activity in Pant – the Meet and Eat is well attended and has been adapted to be inclusive; this has been successful in attracting adults, children, and individuals who seek succour and comfort in these challenging times. Major festivals are well attended in part because we have a tradition of involving members of the congregation to lead elements of the service. There is now a well-established and highly successful SATB choir, which sings on Communion Sunday of each month and is regularly asked to sing at other local Churches.



We have a range of successful initiatives that add to the vibrancy and relevance of our Church: we are dementia friendly as demonstrated in the work of the Sofa Club monthly meetings; the growth of family worship through involving our young people in MAP developments; our Forest Church.

Our Future

'I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me'. Philippians 4:13.'

The Challenges:

At Morton, we are committed to evangelism and understand that this will be achieved through engaging creatively with our community. We are mindful of the need to become more diverse so that the Church will continue to play an essential role in the life, worship, and well-being of our congregation and the wider community.

To fulfill our vision: **'Together, Committed to Growth, Rooted in Jesus; Fruitful in Mission and Service.'** we have developed an action plan that details what we are doing, how we are doing it, and target milestones so that our spiritual journey can be progressed and achieved. **Together** – We are working hard to continue to build a sustainable and thriving community of worship. We are mindful of our duty of care for each other and strive to be inclusive, open, and welcoming. We do this through a vibrant programme of choral music and recitals and how lucky we are to have a choir involved in our services, the 150 Club which is a monthly prize draw that generates interest, funds, and engagement, our monthly Parish magazine, and 4c's Community group. We are also establishing a Friends of Morton Church group following the very successful community fundraiser that marked the Church's 150th anniversary.

Committed to Growth –

We are committed to bringing in new worshippers by being open, accessible, and substantial in our offer. The Church in Morton holds a special place in the lives of many with several worshippers travelling distances to be with us.

The Forest Church and our links to the School at Bryn Offa enable us to reach out to different age and interest groups.



Rooted in Jesus

Worshippers who attend our services are struck by their accessibility and the deep conviction held within our church services; the warmth, sincerity, and friendliness of our welcome; our commitment and inclusivity and our appetite for challenge and change. We uphold our values, traditions, and history, but we will always keep challenging our customs and practices.

Fruitful in Service and Mission

We do not make presumptions about the needs and wishes of our community. We are here to serve, and it is

important that we listen, communicate, and act by the grace of God on those wishes and needs.

Our PCC is very active in the community ensuring we dynamically harvest those views. We have drawn up a detailed and ambitious set of activities, events, and programmes which resonate with the Diocesan strategy, and we are energetically and purposefully delivering it.

We are very excited by the prospect of our new Rector joining us in the Parish of Morton and leading us in the next stage of our journey of discovery and renewal.



Meet and Eat

Trefonen: All Saints

The Village

Trefonen is a village with a population of about 1400. As well as the church, it has a thriving C of E (controlled) primary school, shop, pub, village hall, playing field and many active community groups.



The parish also includes the smaller adjoining villages of Treflach and Nantmawr and is surrounded by farms and outstanding countryside. Offa's Dyke Path runs through the villages. The church, built in 1820, is well maintained, has Wi-Fi, and part of the closed churchyard has been turned into a community garden. The church is usually open during the day.

Church Family and Worship

Our Church Family, with members coming from a variety of denominations and traditions, is friendly and welcoming. We are outward-looking and sensitive to the Holy Spirit to guide us in showing Jesus' love to the community. Our Sunday worship services are a mixture of Holy Communion (limited during our "vacancy" to once a month) and "Services of the Word", led by our Lay Reader or our lay worship leaders, often with other members of the congregation participating.



We are open to refreshing our styles of worship and liturgy. There is a small group leading the singing, sometimes with instruments; we mostly use Mission Praise. Twice recently a small singing group of schoolchildren has participated in special services, bringing with them many friends and family. There is coffee and fellowship after the services.

We continue our fellowship in midweek Home Groups, where we learn, grow in our faith and support each other, so that we are ready to share our faith in our daily lives. A group meets every month to pray specifically for the community. The PCC endeavours to maintain its financial responsibilities and ensures that the parish can pay its Common Fund contribution each year, whilst supporting the Rector's expenses, Benefice Administrator and maintaining the church building.

Community

We want our church to be a central part of the community, not a separate entity only for a few. We therefore try to be outward-focused and to participate fully in community events, such as the Hill Walk Weekend, and in local groups.

Some examples of the work to support our commitment to community outreach:

- community events at Easter, Harvest and Christmas including BBQs, children's games, interactive story-time and occasional outdoor services on the Chapel Green (Summer 24 above) followed by light lunch at the pub. These events are planned by the Mission Steering Group and assisted by the wider Church Family; they have a particular focus on children and families and are not infrequently attended by real donkeys!



- our weekly Community Café in the Village Hall which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2025. It is run by church volunteers with support from other members of the community. 20-30 folk attend each week, including many non-churchgoers. There's an annual Community Café seaside outing.
- keeping in touch with members and others in need through the Pastoral Visiting group
- the issuing of a Welcome Pack with information about the church and community
- hosting a Harvest lunch in the Village Hall for all in the community

- holding regular services at the local care home
- supporting the annual Hill Walk event, organised by a church member, raising 5-figure sums for charity whilst bringing the whole community together in lots of activities including a church service indoors or on Chapel Green
- members of our congregation are involved with other community groups (Gardening Club, WI, Parish Council, etc.)
- We publish a printed Parish magazine for the whole community, also available online, 10 times a year, free of charge; it has a Facebook page for more timely news.



A wet summer morning at the café

Our School

We have good links with Trefonen C of E primary school next door to the church and are eager to ensure that they continue. About half of the pupils live in the parish, so we want to build a closer relationship between the church family and the children, staff and parents. A church member is currently Chair of Governors and the Rector is an ex-officio governor. An associate minister from Holy Trinity, Oswestry, is co-opted as a Foundation Governor and takes assemblies during the vacancy.

Lively end of term school services and drama events are held in the church, which are very well attended by parents. There are class visits to the church where members of the congregation explain the meaning of Christian symbols and the children ask questions about the Christian faith. Every week, four church members go into school to help the children with their reading. We support the Schools Christian Worker who works in the schools across the Oswestry area, including our own.

Looking more widely...

- We belong to and are represented at meetings of Churches Together in Oswestry;
- We collect and deliver food for the Oswestry Food Bank regularly, especially at Harvest;
- We have an annual Toy Service to collect toys, provisions and toiletries for the Food Bank and a nearby Family Crisis Centre.
- We believe in planned giving and set aside part of our income to donate to selected charities at home or abroad.



...and looking forward...

We recognise that we are an ageing congregation with limited resources (*at present!*), but we have big hearts and high hopes! We need a leader who will share our vision, who will prioritise relationships with people and sharing the gospel, who will encourage and enable us to continue in loving outreach and develop as Christ's contemporary disciples. We believe that we have potential for growth, particularly among the younger people in our parish, and want someone to join us in taking up that challenge.

Our vision, and expectation, is that as we grow in love and faith, God will create opportunities for us to express our faith lovingly and intelligently to people in our 21st century community. Our hope is that they will see that Jesus Christ is relevant to their lives, come to personal faith and want to join us, making our church family more representative of the community and creating a further springboard for the growth of God's Kingdom in Trefonen.

We conclude with a prayer

GOD OUR FATHER

*You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His Body in this place.*

*Send us your Holy Spirit,
to fill us with vision, energy,
and faithfulness in prayer,
that we may be true to our calling
to bring new life to our communities.*

*Guide with your heavenly wisdom
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this Benefice,
that the one whom we receive
may be a wise and caring shepherd of your people:
ready to serve us with joy,
to build us up in faith,
and to lead us by example
in loving obedience to your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Appendix: Role Description and Person Specification

Rector of the Border Benefice

Initial Role Description

This will be reviewed with the Archdeacon of Salop after six months in post

General

- To exercise faithfully and diligently the ministry of a parish priest as canonically defined and as appropriate in the benefice, deanery and diocese
- To lead, pastorally and collaboratively, the mission and ministry of the parishes of the benefice, in living out our vision of [‘Seeking the Kingdom’](#)
- To exemplify and promote good safeguarding policy and practice, in line with [‘Promoting a Safer Church’](#) as [implemented in Lichfield diocese](#).

Specific

The parishes have identified the key responsibilities for their new incumbent (see p.10 of the profile), and so the incumbent will be expected to lead, inspire and resource the churches to:

- **Tell**
 - Guiding the PCCs in implementing their commitment to the Diocesan Strategic Framework for Mission;
 - Working with key people in the local primary schools, including involvement in governance of CE (Controlled) schools; planning for further development in this area.
- **Teach**
 - Develop varied and targeted activities to prioritise members’ spiritual development;
 - To guide the establishment of house groups and other opportunities to explore faith;
 - To continue development of different forms of worship and liturgy to build engagement and participation.
- **Tend**
 - Develop teams for tasks and projects, and give them the framework to do their jobs;
 - In particular, develop our existing teams of pastoral support and worship leaders;
 - Oversee our safeguarding officers, and lead on policy and procedure;
 - Become familiar with and relate to community groups within the parishes.
- **Transform**
 - Help church members to develop prayerful, reflective approaches to discussion and outreach, to become agents for change;
 - Support the PCCs to become Dementia Friendly churches;
 - Encourage endeavours to challenge violence and work for peace;
 - Continue to develop our shared life as one benefice of four distinct parishes
- **Treasure**
 - Encourage and promote commitment to being eco-friendly churches;
 - Promote safeguarding of the integrity of creation, and help us to address environmental concerns;
 - Help us to make the most of our amazing surroundings!

Person Specification

We are looking for a person who is:

- In priest's orders in the Church of England or in a church with which the Church of England is in communion, and has completed successfully IME4-7 or the local equivalent; and who has at least three years' experience of ordained ministry in the Church of England or other Anglican church in the British Isles;
- Committed to and passionate for rural ministry and mission through and beyond parish churches;
- Able to lead communities through change, challenge and support with love and tact;
- Experienced and skilled in developing, supporting and resourcing teams to deliver ministry and mission;
- A clear and engaging preacher across a variety of congregations and age groups;
- Organised, skilled in prioritisation and wise in the use of time, including for their own rest and refreshment;
- Willing to find or ask for help and support;
- Familiar with and committed to the principles and practice of safeguarding in parish leadership;
- In possession of a full driving licence and with use of a vehicle for work purposes;
- Willing to laugh with us.