

Kinnerley

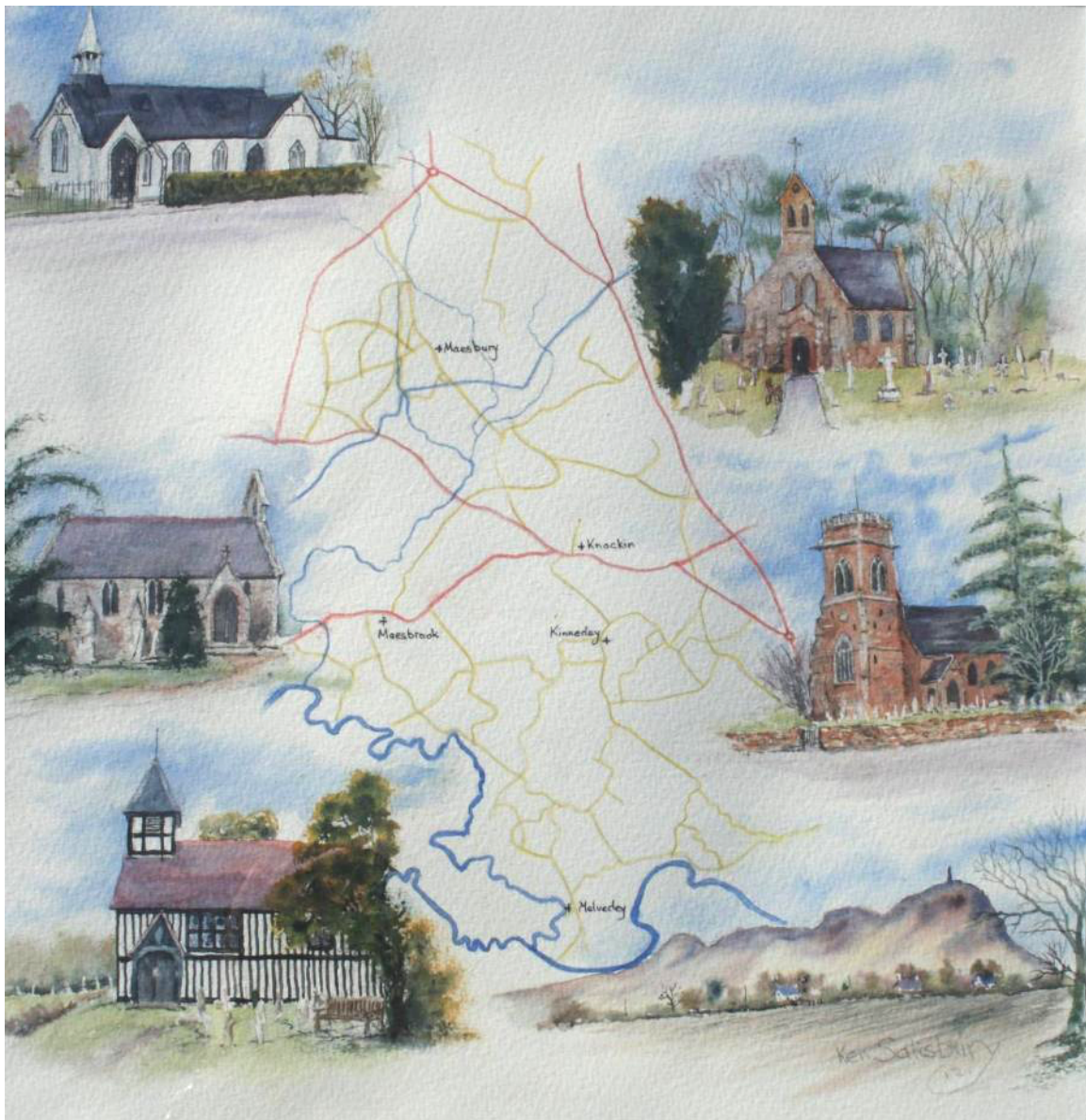
Melverley

Maesbury

Knockin

Maesbrook

Our Parishes



The picture is from a painting by local artist Ken Salisbury

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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 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



From the Bishop of Shrewsbury and the Archdeacon of Salop



We're delighted that you're looking at this post, as Interim Minister of Kinnerley with Molverley, Knockin with Maesbrook, and Maesbury 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. Reaching from the Cheshire border in the north to the edges of the Shropshire Hills (and the Diocese of Hereford) in the south, and from the outskirts of Wolverhampton in the east to across the Welsh border in the west, 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, of which nearby Oswestry is key to these parishes, and is a growing community. In all these settings we are *Seeking the Kingdom* of the one God whose love is constant in all places.

This post will give the new minister a real opportunity to lead and serve in a benefice of five parishes who have grown together as a benefice. The different villages, distinct but mutually-supportive congregations and very different church buildings are within a relatively compact area, and we believe that there is a great future for creative developments developing distinct strands of worship, spiritual growth, mission and nurture.

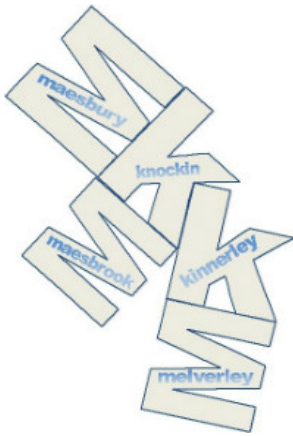
It is because of our confidence in the future of the benefice that the Diocesan Board of Finance has committed to provide full-time ministry here, with a tapering 'subsidy' to the common fund request budgeted up to 2032 to allow time for the growth of the churches into lasting sustainability. At this point (or sooner if possible) we hope and expect to make a permanent full-time appointment. For more details of the interim aspect of this post, please see appendix 1; for the core of what we believe God is calling the minister here to lead and shape, please read the body of this document!

We hope that this profile gives you enough insight into the benefice and the role 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

The Role



The United Benefice of Kinnerley with Meverley, Knockin with Maesbrook, and Maesbury

The Challenge

¹¹For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. *Jeremiah 29: 11 - 13*

During our time of vacancy many of us have taken encouragement from these verses. They have been drawn to our attention more than once when some of us have met together to pray about the future of our benefice. It is reassuring that God has a plan for us even if the detail of that plan may not be clear to all of us at this point in time. We are looking for a shepherd who will help us to hear God’s voice more clearly and discern how his plan for us is to be worked out and implemented in the years ahead.

We also need someone who will encourage all of us to deepen our daily walk with God and help us to seek God with all our hearts. Post pandemic our congregations have been smaller and we need help as we seek to grow our congregations again and particularly we need to grow younger. There are signs of encouragement with the group of young mums who meet once a week in Kinnerley for coffee and toast after dropping off their children at school. Many of these young mums with their husbands and children also come to the monthly Family Church.

We need help to grow this work with young families and to develop the already good links with the local church primary school in Kinnerley. This is going to be key in growing younger. Several of our villages have new housing that is the process of being built or is recently completed. Reaching out to these new people in our communities is another thing we need help with.

Finances are another big challenge. With smaller ageing congregations, finding the money to meet our Common Fund payments and to maintain our buildings is difficult. There are people in our local communities who are happy to get involved in helping to organise fund raising events even though they do not come to church. We need someone to encourage the best use of the gifts of the people in our congregations and those in the wider community. The appendix on p.24 sets out a little of the challenge of building sustainability, which contributes to this being an interim appointment in the first instance.

Profile of Parish Priest

We are looking for a minister who:

- is prayerful and will encourage us all in our personal walk with God
- is approachable, caring and prepared to become involved with the wider community
- is creative, innovative and dynamic and able to inspire us to revitalise all that we do
- is sympathetic to a range of different traditions as we have people in our five congregations who are liberal catholics, evangelicals and charismatics!
- values the potential of our rural churches, appreciates the challenges they face and has a vision for their future
- will bring wise leadership to our five churches and their PCCs, and support the advances the Benefice has made in working together to support each other
- will encourage the use of both the natural and spiritual gifts within the church members and will encourage every-member ministry
- will minister to the faithful senior members of the community with a strong emphasis on pastoral care
- will connect with and recognise the opportunities for ministry to those who are attracted to community events, special services and festivals
- will build on the good relationship the Benefice has with the local school and the connections we have through our work with children and young people
- is comfortable with presenting the gospel in less formal ways to attract people of all ages and build up our congregations
- will make the most of the many volunteers from the church and from the wider community who are keen to help

Support given to the Parish Priest

Our church members are involved in helping to run many aspects of life in our benefice including:

- Worship and music
- Lay led services
- Prayer and Bible Study groups
- Pastoral care and visiting
- Working with young people
- Management of benefice finances and fundraising
- Maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Maintaining our benefice website and our various Facebook pages

Obviously we realise the importance of allowing our priest and his or her family privacy and space and will respect their need for time off and holidays.

The Benefice



This lovely corner of rural Shropshire lies in the shelter of the Welsh Hills. The Benefice is compact in size and shape, being no more than 6 miles from N-S and E-W. The population is about 2000 people. There are good road links to local towns and the cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. There are also frequent direct trains to Shrewsbury, Chester, Birmingham and Cardiff from a nearby station. These offer convenient connections to towns and cities throughout the country.

The five villages which make up the Benefice have strong social links, and the five churches work well together. However, as the enclosed parish profiles suggest, they are five villages and church communities, with different strengths and weaknesses, different needs and different ways of working.

All of our churches are kept open in daylight hours. With the aid of some lottery funding, resources have been provided in all five churches for people who visit our churches. These include Guide books and Church Detective books and V-Boxes that will give an audio guide to people with mobile phones. Walking and cycling trails have been established to connect our five churches and there are guide books for the trails as well. A group of us completed the 17 mile journey on foot around our five churches on a sponsored walk to raise money for Shropshire Historic Churches.

As you will see from the Mission Action Plan, the focus is on working together in order to support each of the five churches in growth. The smaller churches struggle in various ways and our aim is to secure their future by drawing on the strengths that we are blessed with across the Benefice. Growing disciples is a priority and there are joint opportunities for worship, prayer, teaching and learning within the Benefice, and from our growth as disciples we believe there will be opportunities to bear fruit in due course.

On most Sunday mornings there are services in only two of our five villages so this gives people the opportunity of attending worship at other churches in the benefice when there is not a service at their home church. On a fifth Sunday the five churches come together for a joint Benefice service, meeting in a different church each time. After these services we always have coffee and this provides a good opportunity to build relationships with people who attend the different churches. A number of regular events such as our Lent Lunch are organised on a Benefice level.

The Benefice has established shared ministry patterns. Representatives from each of the parishes meet with the Rector from time to time with the aim of looking at the overall vision for the Benefice and how this is worked out both jointly and within the individual parishes. Any new ideas are then passed on to the individual PCCs to discuss. The wardens and those who lead Lay-led services also meet with the Rector from time to time to discuss service schedules, especially around the major festivals where there are opportunities to organise services that might appeal to the wider community.

The Benefice has in recent years attracted three curates to complete their training with us.

Pastoral Care

The clergy visit sick and infirm members and pastoral care is also carried out informally by many church members being good neighbours in our rural communities. One of the advantages of small villages is that people tend to be more aware of the needs of those who live around them.

Worship

SERVICE SCHEDULE ... usual pattern					
DATE	Kinnerley	Melverley	Knockin	Maesbrook	Maesbury
1 st Sunday	9.30 am Worship Lay-Led	6.00 pm Holy Communion	No service	No service	11.15 am Holy Communion
2 nd Sunday	4.00 pm Family Church	No service	10.30 am Worship Lay-led	10.00 am Holy Communion	No service
3 rd Sunday	9.30 am Holy Communion	No service	No service	No service	11.15 am Worship Lay-Led
4 th Sunday	No service	No service	10.30 am Holy Communion	10.00 am Worship Lay-led	No service
5 th Sunday	10.30 am Benefice Holy Communion	rotates	around	the five	churches

The Rector and the Curate led the Holy Communion services and during our time of vacancy these services are being led by various retired clergy. The other Sunday services are usually lay-led.

We have also had a mid-week Holy Communion service at 10.00 am on Wednesdays but we have not been able to provide that during our time of vacancy

2023 data recorded for Stats for Mission

	Kinnerley	Melverley	Knockin	Maesbrook	Maesbury
Electoral Roll	53	17	16	10	23
Worshipping Community	80	8	11	14	22
Average Attendance	20	8	16	10	23
Christmas Attendance	150	12	15	14	60
Baptisms	7	1	0	1	0
Weddings	2	1	1	1	0

Funerals	2	0	2	1	1
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Special services are held from time to time especially around major festivals. The Christingle, Carol services, Nativity service and Crib services in the run up to Christmas and also Easter, Harvest and Remembrance Day services draw in folk who do not come regularly to our churches and occasional reflective services in the evening add another dimension to our worship.

Family Church

Family Church meets once a month on a Sunday afternoon in St Mary's Kinnerley although those involved in leading this group come from several churches in the benefice. It is aimed at families with children of primary school age but all are welcome to attend. Informal worship with children's songs and craft activities around a Bible theme are followed by some light refreshments. Numbers attending vary from month to month but are usually somewhere between 12 and 36.



Easter Egg Hunt at Family Church on Easter Saturday 2024

Prayer and Study Groups

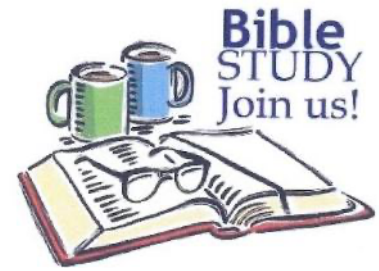
Lent courses ... We have often held a course that met once a week during Lent to help people to deepen their faith. Courses we have followed most recently have included The Romans Course, The Unity Course, The Bible Course and The Prayer Course.

Away days ... In the past we have sometimes organised a whole day when some of us can get together to explore a particular topic through worship and group discussions with a fellowship meal at lunch time.

Deanery days ... More recently days like this have been arranged on a deanery level and some folk

from our benefice have participated in a few of these events that have been well received.

The Benefice Bible Study meets fortnightly and is well supported by a small group of members keen to explore the Christian faith further. Meeting twice a month, they look at relevant topics, enjoy fellowship and prayer together and have some good discussions. In the past this group has been held in one of our churches or in peoples' houses but is currently meeting in a local pub on Tuesday evenings. **The Prayer Breakfast** is once a month on a Saturday.



Coffee stop



This group meets once a week in St Mary's Church in Kinnerley. Young mums get together on Tuesday mornings during term time after dropping off their children at the school. Toddlers can play with the toys that are provided whilst their mums enjoy coffee and toast. The young mums largely organise this event for themselves but people from our congregations drop in occasionally to meet up and chat with this group. Many of the young mums who attend the weekly coffee stop come along with their husbands and children to the monthly Family Church.

Mother's Union



Kinnerley Mothers' Union has 17 members, including some men! They meet once a month to listen to an interesting speaker or have a DIY meeting, discussing family life and sharing fellowship.

They are an active group supporting practically and financially projects which come under the umbrella of Mothers' Union, both here and abroad.

Reaching out

Our five churches are very keen to reach out to our communities and all our services and events are published in the monthly Telescope magazine which is delivered to many people in our villages. The benefice website and various Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups also help us to communicate.

KMKMM Benefice www.fivechurchtrail.co.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/kmkmmbenefice>

<https://www.facebook.com/stmaryskinnerley>

<https://www.facebook.com/stpeterschurchmelverley>

<https://www.facebook.com/STMARYSCHURCHKNOCKIN>

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnschurchmaesbrook>
<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnthebaptistmaesbury>

The School

Kinnerley Church of England Primary School has always had very close links with our benefice and we are very keen to continue and deepen the ties that we have with this school that lies very close to St Mary's Church in Kinnerley. The school of approximately 80 pupils from aged 2-11 is a wonderful community of people. With a very positive report from SIAMs in April 2024 and a strong 'Good' from Ofsted in June 2024, the school is a thriving, happy place.

Our clergy have gone in to the school regularly to lead school assemblies and have run a weekly after school club with games and Christian content. They have also provided teaching on topics with spiritual themes for both staff and pupils. The whole school plus many of the parents come to the church in Kinnerley several times a year for services focusing on major festivals. Individual classes have also come into the church at other times; for example to join with the church congregation at a mid-week Holy Communion service. In the past the Rector has always been a foundation governor. The Headteacher promotes and encourages the involvement of families with the local church and works closely with the Rector to support relationships. Primarily the most essential role with the school is a relational one, getting to know families in order to support our community with Jesus' love and compassion.

These words are taken from the school website:

"We benefit from links with the church and clergy in all sorts of ways, such as teaching led by clergy, after school clubs, and the provision of services such as Harvest Festival, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter, as well as weekly worship and Leaver's Assemblies. These links are not 'add-ons' ... they are integral to the life of our school and part of who we are."

Follow this link for more information about our local church school:

[A Church School – Kinnerley Church of England Primary school](#)



Pupils' environmental footprint pledges that were exhibited in Knockin and Melverley churches

The Rectory



This is a large modern four bedroom house situated in a quiet spot 200 metres from St. Mary's Church, Kinnerley and adjacent to open farmland.

The property consists of a lounge, dining-room, study, kitchen, utility room, downstairs cloakroom and upstairs, four bedrooms and a family bathroom.

It is centrally located within the Benefice and the furthest church, Maesbury, is only about four miles away.

It has a large fenced garden, an open outlook to the rear and a spectacular view from the front looking across fields towards the Breidden Hills.





Parish Profile

Kinnerley

Kinnerley is the largest of the five communities and contains the hamlets of Dovaston, Knockin Heath, Pentre and Edgerley. It has around 410 houses and the population was 934 in the 2021 census. St. Mary's Church is the main focal point in the centre of the village, with a shop, post office, public house and parish hall close by. The centre of the village has recently been designated a conservation area. The Primary School is a few hundred yards away. There are regular bus services to Oswestry and Shrewsbury and a Medical Centre in Knockin, about 1 mile away.

St Mary's Church

The church was established in the 8th century, the tower was rebuilt in about 1604 and the Nave in 1770 using local sandstone. The tower was raised and the Porch added in the 1870s. The church is Grade II* listed. The church comfortably seats 150 and is in a good condition following extensive conservation and reordering over a number of years.

Finances

St. Mary's Church has for many years managed its finances responsibly, always paying the Parish Share on time. In addition, it has made major improvements to the fabric of the building, together with internal reordering. It is now forecast that falling numbers in the Electoral Roll and congregation will make it increasingly challenging to meet the financial demands placed upon us in future years. This is currently being addressed by the PCC and plans are being developed.



Mission

St Mary's supports a number of outside activities and charities, the principal ones being: Medic Malawi, and the Oswestry and Borders Foodbank.

Closer to home St Mary's is very keen to develop its mission to the local community by strengthening the ties it has with many local people who volunteer to help the church with many practical tasks like tending the cemetery, locking up the church, arranging flowers and so on. Many more local people are always willing to help with organising events like the Fete and the Beer festival, both of which happen annually and raise lots of money for the church and also build strong links with the community.



Worship

A lay-led Worship service is held on the first Sunday and a Holy Communion service on the third Sunday. On the second and fourth Sundays people can attend services in other churches in the benefice. On the fifth Sunday there is a Benefice Holy Communion service which rotates around the five villages. Major festivals like Christmas and Easter and services at Remembrance and Harvest draw in many people who are not regular worshippers and the Crib Service in particular always attracts a lot of families with young children. The monthly Family Church that meets in Kinnerley is mentioned in the Benefice pages. St Mary's are keen to explore other ways of drawing new people into our church.

Community Events

The church is always packed for the annual Carol Concert. The annual Church Fete too is always well attended and last year this included a Tractor Run. Other local regular events include a Beer Festival organised jointly with the Parish Hall committee, Whist Drives and Ride and Stride. All these events help raise funds for the church and are opportunities to forge links with those who do not attend services.



A monthly "Community Coffee" group meets in church on Saturday mornings and is very well supported by the wider community. The weekly Coffee Stop involving young mums is mentioned in the benefice pages. Volunteers from the church and wider community undertake a range of activities including bell ringing, church cleaning, flower arranging, grass cutting and other tasks.

Community coffee



Festival flowers





Parish Profile

Molverley

Welcome to our Church

St Peter's church is situated on the banks of the River Vyrnwy, close to the confluence with the River Severn. The timber-framed grade 1 church is an important and rare example of English churches, one of the oldest of its type in the country. It was

rebuilt in 1406 to replace the wooden church that was burnt down by Owain Glyndwr during the Welsh uprisings in 1401. Comprehensive history books can be found in the church and also on the www.fivechurchtrail.co.uk website.

Our community

Molverley is the smallest of the five parishes in the Benefice. It has approximately 64 houses and the population was 158 in the 2021 census. The amenities in the village include the church, village hall, two holiday cottages and a caravan/camping site. The main employment in the area is still agriculture but many commute for work or work from home. Situated on the Shropshire Way and Severn Way it attracts cyclists, walkers and visitors from all over the world. The church doors are always open, creating a warm welcome and the porch offers a place of rest and shelter.

Our worship

St Peter's is an active place of worship, upholding gospel values. This is shown in practical action and outreach through hospitality in the local community. The church is particularly known as a place of peace and tranquillity, welcoming pilgrims and visitors from around the world. The church also offers pastoral care and support to people living in the community. Regular services are held each month alongside benefice and special services. Due to the possibility of flooding we do not hold regular monthly services in December, January or February although our **Christmas Nativity Play with Carols** is always very popular.



We are a friendly open church, often welcoming cyclists, walkers and parishioners from other churches to our services. We often celebrate birthdays and can sometimes be seen singing happy birthday and eating cake after an evening service. This photo shows a **group from a church in Shrewsbury who visited our church and then celebrated Evensong with us.**



Annual Plant Sale in Molverley



Christmas Concert featuring local Folk Group

Our future

Challenges ... generations of parishioners have contributed their time, skills and money – all voluntarily – to ensure that the church continues to function as a viable building and place of worship. We rely on local volunteers in addition to our small congregation and visitor contributions to help with the maintenance and funding of the church. Many in our local and wider community are deeply connected to Molverley church through their family, love of the area, or history. For many reasons they do not or cannot attend services. We aim to keep in touch with the local community through village hall events, inviting them to seasonal services, concerts and other fund raising events. We can also link to the community through various Facebook pages:

Molverley Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpeterschurchmolverley>

MELVERLEY Then and Now Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/347857268624631>

We are committed to growing the church. We would like to:

- Develop the church as a place of pilgrimage
- Extend our relationship with other churches beyond the Benefice
- Continue to grow our congregation and connect with the community



Pilgrims led by Bishop Sarah call in at St Peter's



Parish Profile

Knockin

Knockin is the third largest parish in the Benefice and encompasses the hamlet of Osbaston. It has around 150 houses and the population was recorded as 328 in the 2021 census. The busy B4396 road runs through Knockin, taking traffic from the A5 to Bala and into Central Wales. The village of Knockin is a designated conservation area and has bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday lets, a pub, village shop, village hall and a medical centre with dispensary. The popular Knockin and Kinnerley Cricket Club received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The housing in the parish is mixed but is largely owner-occupied, with some rented properties. Whilst most houses are old there is some modern development and four working farms. Twenty new houses were built in the village recently and more development is planned so the population is likely to increase further. Many of the inhabitants are retired, with most of those who are employed working in Oswestry, or commuting to Shrewsbury or Telford.

St. Mary's is a Grade II* listed building established in 1195, though largely restored in the 19th century. The average attendance on Sundays for 2024 was 16 adults and 0 children although some special services attracted more than this. The chancel area of the church can be used as a place for smaller groups to meet. At the rear of the church near the font there is a small library of Christian books that people can borrow.



Knockin church is always kept open in daylight hours and there is a large graveyard surrounding the church which will have vacant plots for many years to come. Lots of people come regularly to tend family graves in Knockin and some of these kindly contribute to the upkeep of the graveyard. We are also fortunate that some villagers who do not attend the church are willing to help with things like church cleaning and flower arranging.

Mission

Knockin church contributes to 'Churches Together' in Oswestry to support the School Christian Worker Project, and also supports the work of the British Red Cross through regular donations. A Benefice Lent Lunch is usually held annually in Knockin Village Hall and for the last few years funds raised at that event have gone to one of the British Red Cross appeals.

Filling Station



The village of Knockin hosts the area Filling Station which has been successfully running since April 2015 and once had 40 to 50 people from across the area attending each month, though since the pandemic numbers have fallen. This is a non-denominational worship and teaching event which is organised by a number of people from churches in the benefice along with others from churches outside the benefice. These meetings take place in the village hall which is set out like a café to create an informal atmosphere.

Worship

In most months we hold just two services in Knockin ... a lay-led worship service on the second Sunday and a Holy Communion service on the fourth Sunday. On the first and third Sundays there is the opportunity to worship at one of the other churches in the benefice. On the fifth Sunday there is always a Benefice Holy Communion service which rotates around the five churches. We are a warm and friendly congregation and people often like to stay on and chat after our services especially when we serve coffee.



Pastoral Care

Knockin village is a close and caring community. Once a month "Coffee and Chat" meets in the village hall and various other social events are organised there from time to time. Pastoral care is not formally organised but takes place in an organic way amongst friends and neighbours. New villagers are welcomed to Knockin with a card and a copy of the local magazine, 'The Telescope News'.

Finances and potential the future

St Mary's has always met its Common Fund payments in the past but more recently, with an ageing and dwindling congregation, that is becoming more challenging to achieve each year.

An appeal has been running for a number of years, as the church building needed maintenance work such as repointing and decorating. Thanks to generous giving, fundraising and grant applications, some of the work has now been completed but we now have to raise further funds to tackle the next phase of the works. We have no toilet or even a water supply in the church and it would be good to address that too.

With the increase in population in the village we pray that we may be able to reach out to the community and draw more people in to worship with us and build up the body of Christ in Knockin.



Parish Profile

Maesbrook

St John's Church is at a critical stage of its existence. It can grow within the context of a small rural community and has the potential both to promote the Christian message and be key part of village life.

The Church Building

Built in 1878, St John's is a simple building (unlisted), unspoilt by piecemeal accretions, and structurally in good condition. It makes an excellent setting for quiet reflective services, small (seating 75) country weddings, and small scale concerts. The church has always been kept open during the daytime, and often people – both local and those coming from a distance to tend family graves - will come into the church for a moment of quiet.

Full details of the church can be found on the Five Church Trail website

<https://www.fivechurchtrail.co.uk/churches/st-johns-maesbrook>

The Community

Maesbrook has around 107 houses and had a population of 261 in the 2021 census. There is a mainly residential core and dispersed outlying hamlets and more isolated dwellings. There is no public transport, and isolation is a real issue for the elderly, the young and the less physically mobile.

Until recently there was a Methodist chapel, but this has now closed. There is a small village hall and a pub. These buildings provide focal points for different yet overlapping parts of the community. There are various village activities: coffee mornings are held to coincide with the fortnightly visit of the mobile library, an active Gardening Club, Art class, Craft and Chat and events run by the Village Hall Committee. These activities, though not organised by the church, provide an opportunity for the incumbent to meet the village.



Worship

Services are held at St John's on the second and fourth Sundays of every month. The second Sunday is a Holy Communion service, with a Lay-led Worship service on the fourth Sunday. We can join services in other parishes on the first and third Sundays and when there is a fifth Sunday there is always a Benefice service, and Maesbrook takes its turn in hosting this. While attendance at services is sometimes low, there is strong support in the village for the church, what it represents, and the role it is trying to play in the community. Church cleaning, flowers, and churchyard tidying are all undertaken by members of the congregation and non-churchgoers alike. Attendance at Christmas, Easter and Harvest services is higher than a normal Sunday. These festivals are a good opportunity to reach out to the community and with help and support there is potential to be built upon.



The closure of the Methodist Chapel, while sad, has resulted in that church community being welcomed into St John's with a flexibility being readily made to meet that congregation's worship needs. In recent years an All Souls Service has enabled us to reach out to those who have recently lost loved ones in the benefice or those who regularly visits graves at St John's.

The Potential

- A modestly growing population in the village
- Strong goodwill towards the church in the community
- A small group of committed Christians who have been giving sacrificially of their time, talents and money for years in order to maintain the church's presence in Maesbrook in the hope of growing the Kingdom here.
- We are open to new ideas and willing to go outside our comfort zone if necessary.
- St John's fully meets its Common Fund commitments





Parish Profile

Maesbury

St John's Church is an iconic 'tin tabernacle' church building situated in the village of Maesbury, which together with the closely adjoined areas of Maesbury Marsh, Gwern-y-Brenin and Newbridge, had a recorded population of 537 in the 2021 census. The church building was purchased from Harrods in 1906 and erected by local people. It is located 3 miles from the market town of Oswestry.

The village contains two public houses/restaurants and Canal Central which is located in a beautiful setting on the idyllic Montgomery Canal and includes a village shop, tearoom and accommodation. The regular worshipping community are mostly retired people, but certainly very keen to build the congregation and attract younger worshippers. The old school building near the church is now used as a nursery and children from the nursery have visited the church a few times. It would be good to explore ways that we could further develop links with this nursery and the families associated with it. The current congregation work very hard as a team on the upkeep of the church building and the grounds and on the welfare of the church congregation. There is always a very friendly atmosphere and people are supportive of one another and willing to be involved. Some of the congregation keep in touch with each other through the church Facebook page and a WhatsApp group.



Worship and Services

Services are held on the first and third Sundays at 11.15 am. The first Sunday is always a Holy Communion service and the 3rd Sunday is a Worship service which is usually lay led. On the second and fourth Sundays our congregation can join worshippers at one of the other churches in the benefice. When there is a fifth Sunday we always hold a Benefice Holy Communion service which rotates around the five parishes. Members of the congregation are encouraged to join rotas for readers and intercessions. Festivals like Christmas and Easter as well as Harvest and Remembrance



draw in people who do not attend church regularly. The Carol Service is always well attended and the Crib Service on Christmas Eve draws in young families and the children are always keen to participate. We need to explore more opportunities where we can draw in the wider community.

Fundraising and Social activities



In recent years the church has found it more difficult to raise enough money to meet its Common Fund payments as well as maintain the building. This is a challenge that most small rural churches have to struggle with and Maesbury is not alone in this. Social events like the Harvest Supper and the occasional concert or BBQ are usually well supported. Going forward more fund raising events will need to be organised.

The Potential

The congregation has lost a few key people over the last few years but there is a determination to move forward and reach out to the local community and grow the church again. A key part of this process will be building up the faith of the worshippers so they feel more equipped to play their part in spreading God's kingdom in their locality.

Benefice of Kinnerley with Molverley, Knockin with Maesbrook and Maesbury

MISSION ACTION PLAN 2025

(This document is reviewed and updated regularly)

As the five Churches of the Benefice we will continue to work together through prayer, study and worship. We will commit to working jointly on activities where it will benefit the mission and outreach of the parishes and we will also continue to sustain a worshipping presence within each village where there is a Church. We pray that people in our benefice will encounter a church that is confident in the gospel and reaches out in love to the community. Prayerfully led by the Spirit, we will build on current good work and pursue new possibilities.

Our priorities of Developing Disciples, Encouraging Vocations and Inspiring Evangelism remain but following the Shaping for Mission process and the Strategic Framework for 2024-2030 published by Lichfield Diocese, we have selected 3 of the 9 published goals that we would like to concentrate on. We will:

- Be purposeful about evangelism and depth of discipleship, inspiring all to share their faith story
- Engage creatively with local communities
- Grow younger

Here are a few examples of things that might help us achieve these goals:

- Encourage more people to read a lesson or lead intercessions in church
- Encourage people to see that church is not just something that happens on Sundays
- Encourage more people to join a Bible study group like the one that meets in the pub in Kinnerley
- Encourage more people to attend the monthly Prayer Breakfast
- Encourage more people to attend the monthly Mothers' Union meetings
- Encourage more people to attend the monthly Filling Station that meets in Knockin
- Encourage people to join a Lent Course that might focus on how to share our faith
- Explore other opportunities to help people grow their faith
- Continue with the monthly Community Coffee morning in Kinnerley
- Support similar events in our other villages such as the Library Bus Coffee in Maesbrook
- Engage with the local community through events like the Fete and the Beer Festival
- Support events such as the annual Plant Sale in Molverley
- Encourage the community to help with things like church cleaning and flower arranging
- Support local groups in our villages such as the Cricket Club in Knockin
- Reach out to new people who move into our villages
- Draw in members of the community to events like Lent Lunches or Harvest Suppers
- Continue to hold occasional concerts in our churches that draw people into the building
- Use opportunities such as Harvest, All Souls and Remembrance to draw people into our churches
- Encourage the Coffee Stop for mothers and toddlers that meets once a week in term time
- Make the most of events like the Nativity and Crib services to build up contact with young families
- Encourage more people to come to the monthly Family Church that meets on a Sunday afternoon
- Use events such as the Easter Egg Hunt to draw more families in
- Build on established links with the local primary school who have some services in Kinnerley Church
- Get involved in School Assemblies from time to time
- When resources allow, re-establish the Supa Club as an after school activity
- Possibly reintroduce things like Experience Easter or School Communion services

Appendix

Initial Role Description

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

General – common to all incumbent-status clergy appointments in Lichfield diocese

- 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 five parishes of the benefice, in living out our diocesan 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 – drawn from the benefice profile

- To help the congregations to hear God's guidance in developing vision for the parishes;
- To develop further the life of the distinct churches, and to support and build upon the advances already made in cross-benefice working together;
- To encourage and resource the spiritual growth of the congregations;
- To encourage every-member ministry, drawing out natural and spiritual gifts, giving active support and development to those exercising ministry and leadership;
- To engage with the local community to help the churches to 'grow younger,' building on encouraging foundations in young families' work;
- To lead in engagement with Kinnerley CofE Primary School;
- To build the financial sustainability of the churches, both from congregational giving and through developing wider community support;
- To minister pastorally, especially to older members of the community, personally and through supporting the ministry of others.

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;
- Mature and disciplined in their own life of prayer and discipleship, and able to encourage others in this by teaching and example;
- Creative and innovative, ready to inspire others into engaging with new things;
- Comfortable working across the traditions of the Church of England as represented in the benefice;
- Happy to lead actively and collaboratively, in a setting where there is a recognised need for and openness to change and growth;
- At ease with the need to make significant progress in the churches' life and sustainability over a six-year period;
- Committed to and passionate for rural ministry and mission through parish churches;
- An innovative thinker and effective communicator;
- Comfortable engaging with and motivating small rural communities, with a ministry of presence as well as of proclamation;
- 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.

Interim post and *Resourcing the Future* Support

This appointment will be on an interim basis for three years, with a potential second appointment for a further three years, part-funded by the diocesan 'Resourcing the Future' fund. This provides up to six years of tapering funding to allow a full-time appointment, based on the assessment that with the right leadership and encouragement, the benefice can develop the capacity to support full-time stipendiary ministry and enable a permanent appointment to be made.

Lichfield diocese relates its Common Fund requests to the cost of deployment. Under the support arrangement, this would in the first year of appointment be reduced by a 35% contribution from the Resourcing the Future fund, with a target of reducing the contribution by at least 5% per year until the full request can be made and met sustainably. This is illustrated by the table below, based on projections made earlier this year. The rise will begin only after an appointment is made. Figures are illustrative only.

Year	'Formula' request	% request	RTF support	Benefice request
2025	£52,893	65	£18,513	£34,380
2026	£53,951	70	£16,185	£37,766
2027	£55,030	75	£13,758	£41,272
2028	£56,130	80	£11,226	£44,904
2029	£57,253	85	£8,588	£48,665
2030	£58,398	90	£5,840	£52,558
2031	£59,566	95	£2,978	£56,588
2032	£60,757	100	£0	£60,757

At the end of this period a permanent appointment will be made if sustainable, and the interim minister will be very welcome to apply for this post if feeling called to do so and under the mandatory retirement age.

In addition to the six-month review with the Archdeacon common to all posts, as this is an interim post there will be additional supportive progress reviews at 12 months and 24 months with the Archdeacon or a senior colleague.