

# TEAM PROFILE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A HOUSE FOR DUTY TEAM VICAR TO SERVE THE VILLAGES OF IPSDEN AND NORTH STOKE WITHIN THE LANGTREE TEAM MINISTRY

## The Appointment

The Bishop of Dorchester and the Team Rector are seeking to appoint a Team Vicar to serve two of the rural parishes which make up the Langtree Team Ministry. The Langtree Team is in a large area of outstanding natural beauty and lies at the southern end of the Chilterns. It is in the Henley Deanery and the Dorchester Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Oxford. The villages lie in an ancient woodland area once known as Langtree, with Reading to the south (about 12 miles), Henley-on-Thames to the east (about 10 miles) and Wallingford to the northwest (about 3 miles).

The Team was formed in 1981 with Checkendon, Stoke Row and Woodcote. In 1993 it was enlarged to include the parishes of Ipsden and North Stoke with Mongewell. The Team was further enlarged in 2003 to include the parish of Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill. The combined electoral roll (2019) for our parishes was 308.

The Team's complete ministerial staff has the Team Rector serving Checkendon and Stoke Row, a stipendiary Team Vicar at Woodcote and non-stipendiary Team Vicars on a house-for-duty basis serving (a) Ipsden and North Stoke and (b) Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill. There is a licensed Reader, a non-stipendiary Team Pastor and a part time Administrator.

The Langtree Team staff provide support for the parishes in developing their response to local ministry needs. Churchmanship across the parishes is central and unfussy.

Each parish in the Team has its own churchwardens and PCC. Each appoints two representatives to the Team Council which meets quarterly. Parishes contribute funds to cover the expenses of the Team, in particular for the staff, team office and parish requisites but in every other way the parishes are financially independent of each other. Each parish maintains a church building and churchyard, the parish quotas are paid in full and all buildings are in good order. The Team Office at Stoke Row has copying and printing facilities, and the paid Administrator is available to assist all the ministry team in the desk bound aspects of ministry.

Our website and facebook pages give a good perspective on the ministry we share.

***[www.langtreechurches.org](http://www.langtreechurches.org)***

***[www.facebook.com/langtreechurches](https://www.facebook.com/langtreechurches)***

The Team's main priorities are the provision of worship on a regular basis at each of the member churches and pastoral care that is both realistic and appropriate. There are many opportunities for Christian witness and fellowship in the communities that we serve, and the Team Council encourages an adaptable, creative response to these by PCCs and staff team members.

Whilst the House for Duty vacancy will be primarily involved with parochial ministry in Ipsden and North Stoke, the Team staff are expected to be flexible in their approach to ministry, so that, for example, holiday leave or other absences may be covered elsewhere in the Team.

## St Mary's Ipsden and St Mary's North Stoke.



*The Street, Ipsden.*

### Ipsden

The village is part of the Chiltern AONB landscape with rolling hills, woodland and large mixed/arable farms. It is a working community of about 300 people. There is the last remaining post office in the Team area which is the hub of the village. The hamlet of Hailey falls within the parish and includes the popular King William pub with its magnificent views across the Chilterns. The local economy is mainly agricultural, but also within the village there are several thriving small businesses. There is a private nursery school, a well-supported cricket club, Village Hall and website. [www.ipsdenvillage.co.uk](http://www.ipsdenvillage.co.uk) Church members produce "The Window", a monthly newsletter for both Ipsden and North Stoke parishes.



*Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. Jn 4:35*



*St Mary's Ipsden*

The parish church of St Mary the Virgin seats 120 and the churchyard is well cared for. The chancel is maintained by St John's College Cambridge. The Church Electoral Roll stands at 41. The average Sunday attendance is about twenty-one.

The Church dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The church bells (1592 and 1801) and the organ (1896) have both have been thoroughly overhauled and restored this year.

A project is under way to install a WC with disabled access in the Church, and construction is planned to start in the second half of 2019.



*Mr & Mrs Bunn bring a little jollity...*

Ipsden is an artistic community. The St Mary's Players is a lively and enthusiastic church based drama group, who have staged an annual village pantomime for more than 15 years; and the PCC has an active Entertainments Committee. Music is an important part of worship at St Mary's, and the current PCC Secretary also serves as Music Director. Three organists are available, one has achieved FRCO, and there is a very competent choir.

Team clergy are often invited to participate in village entertainments, especially the Pantomime and in the summer, Music at the Long Barn. The church hosts monthly Coffee Mornings in the Village Hall, popular Sunday afternoon Tea Concerts, and occasional Art and Craft exhibitions.

## North Stoke & Mongewell



*North Stoke*

Only two miles away from Ipsden, North Stoke is very much a Thames-side village. The Ridgeway footpath runs through the village and churchyard so St Mary's church is regularly visited by walkers. North Stoke is popular for its peace and quiet, as the older part is in a cul-de-sac without any through traffic. It has attracted a combination of commuters travelling to London from Goring station and those in retirement.

North Stoke is currently a parish of about 200 people with a village hall and a golf course, but this is set to increase with the anticipated development of the Carmel College site in the hamlet of Mongewell.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century flint church of St Mary with its unique medieval wall paintings seats up to 100 people and the churchyard is well maintained. St Johns College, Cambridge are responsible for the maintenance of the chancel. The Church is managed by two Churchwardens who live in the village. The typical congregation is between 8 and 12 but there is very strong community support for festival services, notably Easter, Harvest and Christmas, with a full house for the annual Nine Lessons and Carols service. The Electoral Roll has 25 members.

There is an active Playgroup, a Book Club, Beavers and a Village Quiz team that represents both villages in the South Oxfordshire Village Quiz League. There are regular social evenings in the Village Hall. There is also a coffee morning on the first Tuesday of every month which is a good opportunity for all to meet up on a regular basis, hosted by different village members.



*Walkers along the Ridgeway pass the church door of St Mary's, North Stoke.*

St Mary's does not currently have an organist, although we have a fine Allen electric organ. Music in worship is provided by a digital hymnal, operated with an iPad. Like St Mary's Ipsden, we use Hymns A&M new standard edition. We also enjoy singing! The building and churchyard are in good order. Both churchyards at Ipsden and North Stoke are open.



*Interior of St Mary's North Stoke.*

About 80 people currently live in Mongewell, a hamlet half a mile north along the Ridgeway from North Stoke. The ancient redundant (semi ruined) church of St John the Baptist lies in the scenic grounds of the old Carmel (Jewish) College in beside the river Thames.



*St John the Baptist, Mongewell, in the care of the CCT*

Several services are held here each year, notably Carols, and a summer Songs of Praise. Mongewell may grow into a much larger community. Planning permission has been granted for 198 new dwellings on the old College site and if progressed it will increase the population considerably. There are expectations that the project will include good community facilities. There may therefore soon be potential for ministry development and the Team Council envisages that any new Mongewell Estate will eventually become a significant area for Christian ministry within the Team.



*The parishes celebrate Her Majesty's Birthday at The Long Barn, Ipsden.*

## The Other Parishes of the Langtree Team Ministry.

### **Checkendon**



This pretty village has about 470 inhabitants. The medieval church of SS Peter & Paul dates from 1152 and unique wall paintings were discovered at the turn of the millennium. Checkendon is an “iconic” church which attracts many worshippers and visitors to its sacred space. There was a complete re-roofing in 2012 at a cost of over £300,000. The church can seat approximately 120 people and like all the Langtree Churches has an open churchyard. There is a flourishing children’s ministry “Sunday Fun”, based in the neighbouring C of E (Aided) primary school. This has about 70 pupils drawn from surrounding parishes. There is a village hall, preschool, equestrian centre, excellent pub, and several small businesses.  
**[www.checkendon.org](http://www.checkendon.org)**

### **Stoke Row**

This woodland parish has a small Victorian flint church built in 1846. There is a population of about 640 people and the village has a C of E (Aided) school with about 90 pupils which has recently become voluntary aided in status. There is a village hall, sports pavilion, shop and two pubs. There is also a non-conformist Chapel served by a Baptist minister.

Stoke Row is a very active village, with many local clubs and organisations.  
**[www.stokerow.net](http://www.stokerow.net)**. The parish church and Team ministry collaborate with the Chapel and the school in many areas. St John’s might be the smallest church in the Team, but it is very forward thinking. It was the first church in the Team to have an integral toilet and kitchen, and the imaginative reordering has enabled the school to use the building as their hall under licence for four days a week during term time. Last year St John’s became the first church in the Team to offer WiFi Internet.



*Stoke Row schoolchildren in St John's Church, Stoke Row*

## Woodcote



*St Leonard's Woodcote, and a wedding there.*

Woodcote is the largest village in the Team. It has almost 3000 inhabitants, many of whom work in London and Reading as well as locally. There is primary, secondary, private and pre-school provision. The church dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was completely rebuilt in 1846. Development of work with families is a priority and an Open Door service has been running successfully for over three years. The village also has a Roman Catholic church built in the 1950s and served by a priest living in Goring. There are many active village organisations, a large village hall, two general shops, a garden centre and a health centre.

**[www.woodcote-online.co.uk](http://www.woodcote-online.co.uk)**

## Whitchurch on Thames

This is the second largest village in the Team, with many commuters who use the nearby mainline railway station at Pangbourne. The ancient Thameside parish church of St Mary the Virgin was largely rebuilt during the Victorian period. The church facilities have been transformed over the last decade, with a new purpose-built vicarage, and parish room. The PCC have over the last few years been working on the Partnership for Missional Churches (PMC) strategic process. St Mary's is the largest church building in the Team ministry area. Whitchurch on Thames has two pubs, a village hall, and a state primary school.

Payment of 60p will allow you to cross the toll-bridge over the Thames, leaving Oxfordshire behind, to the shops and amenities of Pangbourne. In the Civil War, the Thames here marked the front line between Royalist and Roundhead forces.



*The toll bridge at Whitchurch on Thames, with St Mary's Church in the background.*

## Whitchurch Hill

Up the hill from Whitchurch on Thames lies the smaller sister settlement of Whitchurch Hill. Their combined populations come to around 1800 people. The Church of St John the Baptist is a Victorian "church plant" for the "uphill" community. It has a very large churchyard (that at St Mary's being closed) which serves the whole parish.

Whitchurch Hill is a more rural community than Whitchurch on Thames, with one pub, but no shop or school. Children here can choose between Whitchurch on Thames, or Checkendon schools.

Church services in this parish alternate between the two churches and the congregations are largely the same, with more focused and informal "All-Age Worship" at St John's twice monthly. There is a comprehensive village website at [www.whitchurchonthames.com](http://www.whitchurchonthames.com)

## Parish Priorities at Ipsden and North Stoke.

It will be important for the new priest to work closely with the Ipsden & North Stoke PCC in evolving priorities for ministry, which meet the needs of the parishes and his or her particular skills, but the following areas for possible development in ministry have been identified by the churches:

- Grow our Churches as key centres of our communities.
- Build on and encourage opportunities for greater involvement by lay people and the wider community in worship.
- Maintain a preaching tradition that relates to current issues with an enquiring theological approach.
- Connect with local families and develop relationships.
- Visit homes, creating contacts both within and between various sections of the community, particularly those new to the communities and those in difficulties.
- Help to maintain the production of a newsletter or similar means of focus and communication for the villages.
- Develop educational opportunities among the congregation, encouraging deeper spiritual awareness and greater involvement in the pastoral and missionary work of the Church.
- Encourage Christian discipleship among Church members.
- Continue to develop the working of the PCCs, involving a wide variety of people in leadership.

### Pattern of Worship at Ipsden and North Stoke

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday</b>			
9.30am 11am	Parish Communion Morning Prayer	Ipsden North Stoke	Common Worship BCP
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday</b>			
9.30am 11am	All Age Worship Parish Communion	Ipsden North Stoke	CW
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday</b>			
9.30am 11am	Parish Communion All Age Worship	Ipsden North Stoke	CW
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday</b>			
9.30am 11am	Morning Prayer Parish Communion	Ipsden North Stoke	BCP CW
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday</b>			
10.30am	Team Celebration	A single service somewhere in the Team Ministry Area	Common Worship

The above is a simple outline of the basic pattern at Ipsden and North Stoke. On a given Sunday there are between 7 and 10 services held across the Team Churches, in a wide variety of styles. The Team Ministry offers seasonal templates for regular services such as Holy Communion. The Team Rector actively encourages each parish to develop and adapt its worship pattern to changing needs. Each ordained minister normally spends three Sundays each month at his or her designated church(es) and one Sunday elsewhere. The service plan also involves the Licensed Lay Minister, visitors, and other lay helpers.

### **What do we offer?**

- A welcome to a beautiful part of Oxfordshire from an established, friendly and hospitable benefice
- A location close to Henley-on-Thames and within easy reach of Oxford and London
- A well situated, modern Vicarage (further details below)
- The encouragement and active support of all Church Wardens and PCCs
- The help and assistance of enthusiastic, able volunteers and lay leaders
- Assistance from the benefice office, and an experienced team administrator
- Respect for your time off. A Diocesan agreed holiday entitlement, pro rata.
- Active support for anything that encourages and nourishes your faith and well-being, including continuing education, spiritual support and annual retreats
- A friendly and active Deanery, in a professional and forward-looking Diocese.

### **Vicarage and Location**



The Vicarage is situated in the village centre of Ipsden and is an excellent modern four-bedroom detached house on a small estate.

The property has been upgraded to have very low running costs with the latest developments in low-carbon heating and insulation which has now set a standard for other clergy properties in the future. It is one of the four "eco-vicarages" in the Diocese of Oxford. From the small garden at the back of the house there are attractive views across the fields to wooded hills.

Ipsden village shop and post office is within walking distance.

The vicarage is about ½ mile from Ipsden Church and 2 miles from North Stoke Church, so the ability to drive is essential.

Within the parishes of the Langtree Team, there are primary schools at Woodcote, Whitchurch, Checkendon(C/E) and Stoke Row(C/E), and a secondary school at Woodcote.

There is a medical centre at Woodcote, and a community hospital at Wallingford, the nearest market town. The A4074 which bisects Ipsden and North Stoke has frequent bus services between Wallingford, Oxford and Reading, and there are regular fast train services from Goring (5 miles distant) and Reading (12 miles) to London.

### **Person Specification**

We look for the following qualities in the new Team Vicar:

- A firmly grounded personal faith expressed with humour and tolerance.
- An understanding, and preferably experience, of small rural communities and a vocation to rural ministry.
- Perseverance and cheerfulness in working with small congregations.
- Personal maturity and stability.
- Well organised, and computer literate. Full UK driving license.
- A good listener who is able to relate to a wide range of people and their needs.
- Ability to work collaboratively, contributing to the support and fellowship of colleagues across the Team Ministry and Deanery.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Team Vicar will be licensed to the Team for a period of 5 years, with responsibility for Ipsden and North Stoke parishes.

The appointment is on a “house-for-duty” basis. This means that no stipend is paid, but the postholder will reside rent-free in the Vicarage in Ipsden on the same basis as an incumbent. In return, the postholder is expected to carry out all the usual pastoral and ministerial responsibilities of an incumbent, including chairing of the two PCCs (or sharing this task with lay chairs) and attendance at the quarterly Team Council meetings.

The time commitment involved is the equivalent of two full days per week plus Sundays. Expenses are reimbursed in full, in accordance with Diocesan guidelines. A working agreement will be drawn up and reviewed annually with the Team Rector, to whom the postholder is accountable.

Within these time constraints, the Team Vicar should expect to participate fully in all the activities of the Team, which will include taking services in other churches in the Team, Staff meetings, covering for sickness or holiday and, following consultation with the Team Rector, any other specialist or general pieces of ministry (for example, church school governance) as appropriate. Sharing in the life of the Henley Deanery is expected.

## **Appointment Process**

Applicants should complete the application form available at [www.oxford.anglican.org](http://www.oxford.anglican.org), giving as much information as possible and continuing on additional sheets as necessary. The completed form must be sent or emailed to

The Bishop of Dorchester  
Church House Oxford  
Langford Locks, Kidlington  
Oxford OX5 1GF

Tel: 01865 375541: email: [bishopdorchester@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:bishopdorchester@oxford.anglican.org)

For further details or to arrange an informal visit to the parishes please contact the Team Rector, the Revd Canon Kevin Davies, on 01491 680252.  
Email: [revkevdivies.langtree@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:revkevdivies.langtree@yahoo.co.uk)

CRB Enhanced Disclosure is required for this post.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.” (Proverbs 3:6)*



*Fields around Ipsden and North Stoke*