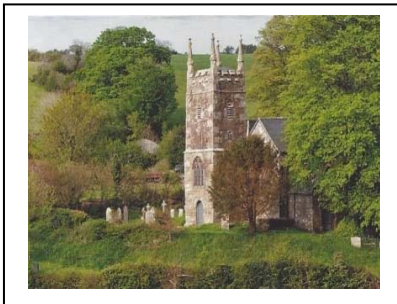


## The Lifton Benefice



## The Benefice and it's Location

Welcome to the Lifton Benefice and thank you for enquiring about our vacancy for a Priest-in -Charge.

The Benefice is formed of the parishes of Lifton, Broadwoodwidge, Kelly with Bradstone, Lewtrenchard, Stowford and Thrushelton.

We are situated in the glorious Devon countryside where narrow lanes open up to provide wonderful views of Dartmoor. We are, however, well connected with the A30 dual carriageway running through the benefice. This means that we are less than an hour from the cathedral city of Exeter with train and airport links. We are also about half an hour from the coast.



We are 5 miles from Launceston, 10 miles from Tavistock and 15 miles from Okehampton. Each town has the usual shops, secondary schools and hospitals. Plymouth is approximately 25 miles south with the historic naval dockyard and barbican.

There are some local bus services from the villages but a car is essential!

## **Foreword by The Acting Archdeacon of Plymouth**

Set in a beautiful corner of Devon, skirting the Cornish border, Lifton Benefice is a group of parishes who are working to be united whilst each preserving their own distinctive contributions to the life of the Benefice and the Tamar Mission Community.

The post of priest in charge of these churches will make a major contribution within the Archdeaconry and particularly Tavistock Deanery. We aim to appoint someone who can build on the faithful ministry of the previous incumbent whose unexpected death was a great loss to the communities in these parishes.

S/he will need to be an integrated mix of pastor, spiritual servant leader and strategic thinker who is comfortable within the rural Anglican traditions of these parishes.

Lifton is the largest centre of population in the Benefice with the other villages being small by comparison. All are keen to be involved with local schools as well as promoting the opportunities that arise through occasional offices.

It is vital that whoever is appointed is happy to work collaboratively with Anglican colleagues in Tavistock Deanery and will be fully committed to the life of the Deanery and particularly with the neighbouring Benefice of Milton Abbot. Mission Communities are an essential and well-established strategy in the Diocese for mission, ministry and growth. This strategy coalesces around three priorities: Growing in Prayer, Making New Disciples, and Serving the People of Devon with Joy. Our Diocesan Strategy document 'Our Vision and Strategy' can be found on the Diocesan website and the emphasis for the next 3 years is on making new disciples. The appointed person will need to show commitment to this. As well as very good local support within the parishes, there are a number of Diocesan resources to draw on to help develop mission and ministry and we hope the person appointed will make full use of them.

*Revd Preb Nick Shutt*

*Acting Archdeacon of Plymouth*

## **About the Benefice**

A Joint PCC was formed to assist the incumbent and the parishes with organising the service pattern, to support one another, share ideas, plan events and mission work. Each parish contributes to the Benefice Central Fund which pays the expenses of the incumbent and visiting clergy. The JPCC meets at least 4 times a year or as necessary and the meetings are usually chaired by the incumbent.

There is a United Benefice Service on the second and fifth Sundays of the month at 10 am which is rotated to all the parishes in the benefice and this is well supported by all 6 churches. There is an annual service, when possible, at Bradstone which is a redundant church in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

We have a retired priest, Reverend John Withers, who lives in Broadwoodwidge and assists with services throughout the benefice. Members of the congregation lead services of Morning Prayer, Songs Of Praise and other services as required.

The Lifton Benefice works alongside the Milton Abbot Benefice and their incumbent, Reverend Andy Atkins, as a Mission Community.

Each parish has a lovely listed church building and has its own characteristics and traditions and hopefully that is conveyed in the following pages which the individual PCCs have written.

Every parish is represented at the Deanery Synod.

Safeguarding procedures are reviewed regularly by each parish.

## **Our Aspiration**

We are looking to recruit a Priest-in-charge who would enthusiastically support our benefice by being:

- ❖ A person with significant experience of parochial leadership and is comfortable with a range of traditions
- ❖ Able to bring people together to engage with the life of the community, building relationships that lead to faith
- ❖ Able to nurture and develop lay involvement, helping people to discover their gifts and use them in the church and the community
- ❖ A person who can maintain and develop close and effective links with the schools
- ❖ Enthusiastic about team working and new challenges

## The Rectory

The Rectory is located opposite the church in Lifton in the centre of the village.



It is an attractive four-bedroomed house built in the 1960's with a garage, pleasant, well-maintained garden and parking for several cars. It was refurbished throughout, including a new kitchen, in 2013.



# LIFTON



Lifton is the largest of the parishes in the Lifton Benefice and is located in West Devon on the Cornish border. Lifton's growing population of about 1200 is mainly housed in the village itself and the two hamlets either side, Tinhay and Liftondown, and there are plans for new family housing developments. The parish covers an area of 2000 hectares which includes several farmsteads.

Lifton has a primary school with pre-school, a doctors' surgery and a village shop with Post Office. There are also two hotels, a public house and a very popular farm shop. There is also the Ambrosia factory and a flourishing industrial estate.

Lifton has a new Community Centre which opened in 2018 and hosts various groups, including Scouts, Cubs and Beavers, the art group, badminton and several exercise classes. There is also a recreation field with children's play area, pavilion and cricket/football pitch which is well used year-round by the village teams. Other groups in the village include the WI, History Group, Reading Group and Snooker Club. The new Community Centre has made the Church Hall redundant and plans are in hand to sell the site, raising some much needed funds.

There are bus services to Launceston, Tavistock, Okehampton and Exeter with their secondary schools and hospitals.

St Mary's church building, which is Grade I listed, mainly dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century with some much earlier walls to the Lady Chapel but with Victorian furnishings and a Norman font. The tower was restored in 1990, the windows in 1995, the roof in 2000 and a Friendship Area with toilet facilities was developed in 2002. The latter provides space for serving refreshments following services and other events, such as the bi-annual Christmas Tree and Flower Festivals, and can also be used for additional seating when we have a large congregation, such as Remembrance Sunday.



Lifton has a Holy Communion service (Common Worship, sung to Marbeck) or Morning Prayer at 9.30am. The average attendance is 25–30. We have a small choir led by a professional musician, who is our organist, and her husband, who composes pieces for the choir. There is a regular mid-week communion followed by coffee and fellowship.



Our regular schedule of services has been disrupted but the parishioners have responded loyally. In addition to our organist and choir we have a good bell-ringing team and the church is kept clean and beautifully decorated with flowers by parishioners. We are able to leave the church open during daylight hours for visitors and prayer.

We have an ongoing programme of improvements to the church building including planning permission for the installation of a communication mast in the tower and a screen to the ringing chamber.

We have good relations with our Methodist friends and the Remembrance Sunday and Good Friday Services are shared with the local Methodist Church. On Good Friday each year we have a Walk of Witness prior to the service which alternates at the Church or the Chapel and is well supported.

Lifton Church has a Facebook page to publicise events and notices are also posted to the village Facebook page. There are plans for a Benefice website.

In the year to 31 December 2018, there were 3 baptisms, 1 wedding and 7 funerals. We currently have 48 on the Electoral Roll.

The churchyard is closed and maintained by West Devon Borough Council.

**Finances** *(copy of the accounts attached)* Our Common Fund share is paid in full. We have regular collections for various Christian charities, individuals have collection boxes for the Children's Society and our Harvest Festival and Crib Services also raise funds for charities.



# BROADWOODWIDGER

The community:

This is a rural parish, northwest of Dartmoor, which stretches from just north of the A30 up the east side of Roadford reservoir. It covers a large area with many isolated farms and hamlets. The total population is around 570, of which approximately 80 are of school age.

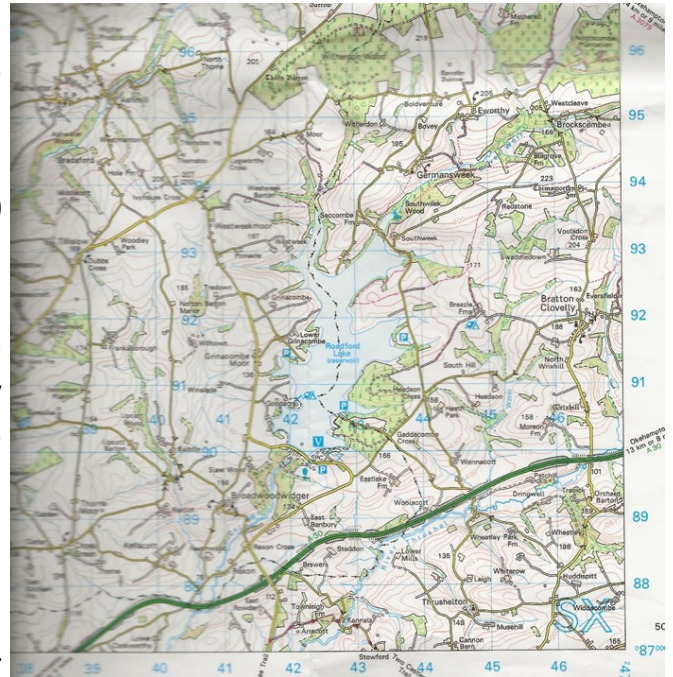
The area historically was strongly influenced by the Methodist movement and socially the community still reflects this divide, although the last of the original six Methodist chapels in the parish closed in 2018.

There is no major employer in the parish, no pub, shop, school or regular public transport. The visitor centre at Roadford reservoir has a café and conference centre and there is also an activity centre supporting sailing and other water sports.

The village has recently seen conversion of several old farm buildings, bringing new comers into the village. In 2017 the village Community Fund completed work to lease and convert the old church room to create a Community Hub, which is actively used for local clubs and socials as well as the church. Active clubs include WI, History Society and Gardening Club.

The church:

The early 13th century church is Grade I listed and in the 19th century was dedicated to St Nicholas. Quinquennials have been carried out and actioned as funds allow.



The service schedule is agreed across the benefice and we aim to hold two services monthly at St Nicholas, one of which is Holy Communion. We are managing to maintain services in the interregnum using a combination of retired priests, self help and favours, but this is not sustainable long term.

We enjoy a regular organist. There is a peal of six bells, which are rung regularly, and we are working to build a team of ringers.



We are proud that currently we conduct services according to the Book of Common Prayer but recognise that we need help and support to introduce some flexibility in this to make our church more inclusive to newcomers whilst supporting our existing congregation.



Our last Electoral Roll stood at 12 but will increase this year as our average congregation has increased over the last few years and is currently 18.

St Nicholas currently pays its Common Fund dues in full. (A copy of the accounts is available.) There is an active PCC with one churchwarden.

We hold fundraising events throughout the year and in 2018 these included a flower festival, concerts and coffee mornings.



*Male voice choir concert*

## KELLY WITH BRADSTONE

We are a small rural parish in the south west of the benefice with a population of around 200. Originally two parishes, we have two churches: St Nonna's, Bradstone and St Mary's, Kelly.



St Nonna's is located on one of the ancient routes into Cornwall and was originally a Chapel of Rest for those crossing the River Tamar by a ford at Greystone. A charming small church, it is now in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust and is still consecrated. We hold a benefice service there each year, and it is used on occasion for weddings and funerals, and is much liked by visiting bellringers. Maintenance of the churchyard remains with the parish.

St Mary's, adjacent to Kelly House, is the working church of the parish.

Consecrated in 1259, only a 14<sup>th</sup> century capital remains from the earliest period. The present building is largely perpendicular, with an interior remodelled in 1865. The chancel was rebuilt in 1710 and the tower, which had become ivy encrusted and dangerous, was rebuilt in 1885. There is 15<sup>th</sup> century glass in one window, the remainder being the work of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lavers and Barraud studio.



The church is grade 1 listed. It is generally in good condition with only a number of more minor jobs highlighted in the current Quinquennial.

It has six bells and holds a special place in the history of Devon ringing. In 1865 it was here that the first full peal of Grandsire Doubles was rung in Devonshire by men of the county. Revd Maitland Kelly, who trained and rang with the local team on that occasion, went on to encourage and train many other teams. He was president of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers for 28 years. The screen behind the altar was presented by the guild to commemorate his work.



*150<sup>th</sup> year commemorative peal filmed for Spotlight SW*

We currently have an electoral role of 14 members, and the average attendance at services is 5-7 people, though this is considerably boosted when there is a benefice service. Normally we have two services a month, one Holy Communion, the other Morning Prayer (which is currently taken by Churchwarden, Warin Kelly). Remembrance Sunday is one of the most well attended services

There is no organist in the parish and for that reason the organ has not been maintained for a number of years. We have a keyboard, however, which is used for benefice services and on other occasions. For our normal services we have a CD player and use the Cantoris CDs which, with their choir, are a great asset.

Our congregation is elderly and at present there is little interest amongst the younger members of the parish. The small village of Meadwell is the central settlement in the parish. With the general decline in agricultural employment most people commute to employment elsewhere and many of the properties are rented, so there is not the cohesion of previous generations.

The committee which runs the village Hall has recently changed to a younger generation so there is hope that this may revive the community spirit.

We currently organize two fund-raising events a year. A midsummer evening walk around parts of the parish, using a mix of tracks, footpaths, fields, and road, followed by a barbecue; and in the autumn a harvest service and lunch jointly organized with the village hall committee

The parish is currently in a safe financial position, and pays its quota at the beginning of each year. We have recently received a legacy that should allow us to carry out the current quinquennial works. However our long term financial situation looks more precarious and unless we can encourage more participation from the next generation we will undoubtedly have to close the church.



With a small population, baptisms and weddings are infrequent and very special occasions for the community, as are funerals.

The Patronage of St Mary's, Kelly remains with the Kelly Family.

Although we are a small parish, we gain strength today from being a part of the Lifton Benefice and seek to encourage the next generation.

## LEWTRENCHARD



The Parish of Lewtrenchard consists of approximately 250 people with an Electoral Roll of 23 members.

The church, St. Peter's, has a thriving congregation (mainly consisting of people from the 'retired' group profile) and continues to be the heart of Lewtrenchard. The church has a reputation for its open and welcoming spirit. We enjoy a regular flow of visitors joining our services from the nearby hotel and from nearby villages and towns.

The Patron of St Peter's, Lewtrenchard is Dr Merriol Baring-Gould Almond.

Originally, St Peter's was the Church of St Petrock. Nothing remains of this church, the building being completely rebuilt in 1261 and again in 1520. The Church of St Peter's today, restored by Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould between 1881-1924, has some interesting internal characterful features. A brief history written by a Baring-Gould descendant is available in the church, with further information available online.

The Revd Sabine Baring-Gould was Squire and Parson at Lewtrenchard from 1881 until his death in 1924 and is buried with his beloved wife Grace in the churchyard. During his lifetime, Sabine Baring-Gould was a high churchman, antiquarian and prolific author of fiction and theological works. He also wrote some notable hymns and collected West Country folksongs. This has proved to be a great asset to the church. Many people visit the church (which is left open during daylight hours) to appreciate his connection and, of course, the resulting income is gratefully received.

The location of St Peter's Church, being in a very small hamlet comprising only the church, manor house (now a hotel) and the Forgotten Garden of Lewtrenchard, means that most of our relatively aging worshipping congregation must always travel to church by car. A few years ago the PCC decided to try to secure the future of the church with the instigation of various alterations by creating a car park, disabled access, toilet facilities and a vestry. Further to this, we are at this moment embarking on a very exciting project: an extension to be built on the north side of the church to increase the size of the vestry, add additional toilet facilities and a room for a kitchen for congregations/parishioners to use for various meetings. In general, to further enhance and improve existing church facilities in line with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For this project, the PCC and its architect have applied and received approvals from the external recognised bodies (with final faculty approval shortly awaited from the Diocese of Exeter). Some funds are already in place and the PCC intends to apply for additional financial assistance in funding the project once all approvals are received, mainly for fitting out the interior.

The nearby village of Lewdown is growing and the Church of England Primary School, built by William Baring-Gould, Sabine's grandfather, has also recently increased in size with additional

classrooms and facilities to accommodate this growing population. As church and community go hand in hand we actively engage with the staff and pupils at the school, providing them with religious services and access to various history projects. The school is thriving, with 100+ pupils including the preschool children. For senior education there are three colleges in neighbouring towns within fifteen minutes' travelling distance.



In addition to the normal regular church services, Eucharist is celebrated using Common Worship, with a regular 20-24 attendees, plus any visitors. The church is already used by the Lewtrenchard Church of England Primary School for services and local history projects. Others, such as the Friends of the Forgotten Garden of Lewtrenchard, Sabine Baring-Gould Appreciation Society and Baring-Gould Festival organisers have used the present facilities for meetings, talks, concerts, etc. It is hoped that more use of the church building itself will be made when the planned facilities are available.

*2018 Christmas Eve candlelit service at St Peter's*

Recently, we have enjoyed relatively more weddings, baptisms and visits to the adjacent 'Forgotten Garden of Lewtrenchard' than in previous years. On all these occasions the existing car park, disabled access and toilet facilities have proved invaluable.

The last quinquennial inspection was carried out in 2016 and the work identified is being undertaken as funds allow. Our Common Fund commitment for 2019 is £10,330.00. The church has, in the past, met its financial needs with prudent stewardship and generous volunteers helping with general and special maintenance.

The church enjoys a well-maintained organ, with several accomplished organists and a bell tower well maintained and rung at church services by a group of dedicated ringers from the benefice. The PCC and its church wardens comprise experienced and dedicated parishioners.

Three more housing developments (totalling approximately 40 homes) are planned for Lewdown. The plans have been passed for two sites to the north of the old A30 road and application has been presented to the borough council for a further development on another site. This should bring more families to the area and hopefully to join our congregations.



*St Peter's Church in spring*

## STOWFORD

Stowford is a very small rural village with a population of less than 100 and an average age between 50-80. There are 11 parishioners on the Electoral Roll; 10 live within the village.



*St. John the Baptist, Stowford (Grade I Listed) - Spring 2018*

Our parish has a beautiful 14<sup>th</sup> century church with a loyal, hard-working and talented small group of supporters. The church was restored and the north aisle rebuilt by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1874. We are about a fifteen minute drive from Okehampton and Launceston, 2 miles from the new A30 and 35 miles from Exeter.

The average church attendance is 8, but can range from this to over 40, comprised mainly of people older than 50. Attendance at our church is much higher at festivals when often we are full.

## Monthly Services (whilst without an incumbent):

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Morning Prayer	11:15
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Holy Communion	11:15
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday		
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Group Benefice Communion	10:00

## The Village of Stowford:

Stowford is a village neighbouring Lewdown, which has a Church of England school, a decent pub in The Blue Lion and a shop / part-time Post Office. Lifton (a bigger village) is 3 miles to the west, where St. Mary's, Lifton is the lead benefice church and where we have Strawberry Fields, a renowned farm shop and restaurant. Stowford has a reputation for an open, welcoming atmosphere, Sunday Eucharists and social gatherings.

The wider parish of Stowford has a population of about 300; an active community, supporting a wide range of village events.

## Supporting Roles in Place:

Wardens	Simon Hedger	Charles Chick
Treasurer	Peter van Delft	
Deanery Synod Rep	Julia Chick	Tavistock Deanery Synod
Secretary	Monique Hedger	
Organists	Marion Lethbridge	Kevin Lane

Our church has an experienced PCC, Deanery synod rep, organists and flower arrangers. Members of the congregation read the lessons and are involved with the services.

The church benefits from the use of Stowford Parish Hall.

Stowford Parish Hall is adjacent to the church and can seat 80 people. It has a kitchen and toilet facilities. The hall has been newly decorated. It is used regularly by the church and hosts the Benefice JPCC meetings. It is also used by Young Farmers and the local History Group.

## Music:

We have a very beautiful and fully restored organ. We share wonderful organists. The Lifton choir joins us for benefice services. The congregations throughout the benefice love the music.

We have an active bell ringing team who circulate around the benefice.

## Finances:

In 2018 total receipts were £9,833.40 and payments £9,626.35. We endeavour to fully benefit from Gift Aid. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 our bank balance was £3,560.82.

## Safeguarding:

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

## Special Events:

We undertook several well attended parish events last year connecting church with community and raised substantial amounts of money to help keep the church open. These included the Stowford Church Lunch, Harvest Festival, Christmas Tree Festival and a Music and Magic event at Hayne Manor. These were advertised in our local Community Newslink magazine. Similar events are planned for 2019. We also have a biannual Open Garden Event which includes the wider, not necessarily churchgoing, community and raises additional funds.

On Christmas Eve we have a Christingle service, which for many years has had a large following, raising money for the Children's Society. We give out around 100 Christingles and the congregation numbers about 120 people. Local children perform a nativity play within the service. This is a tradition that we are keen to maintain.



*St. John the Baptist, Stowford - Christmas Tree Festival 2018*



## THRUSHELTON

Thrushelton lies in a peaceful valley to the south east of Roadford Lake. The 650-year-old church, established as a Chapel of Ease on the Packhorse Trail from Minehead to Plympton, has traditionally been known as 'The Farmers' Church'.



Until 1922, St George's Church was a daughter church of St Mary, Marystowe, but in that year it became a daughter church of St Peter, Lewtrenchard which it remained until the two parishes were formally separated in May 2010. It has been in the Benefice of Lifton since April 1999. Since that date, worship has been in the main the Eucharist, with some Morning Prayer services monthly, taken by a member of the congregation.

Special services are held for the main family festivals at Christmas, Easter and at harvest time.

There is a strong historical tradition of broad churchmanship, which has been strengthened as the units into which the wider Anglican Church is organised become ever larger. The parish would welcome the appointment of a woman priest.

During the year we organise several fund-raising events including a very popular hot Sunday roast lunch. We are also well known for our harvest festival celebrations with unique pillar decorations following a tradition passed down through the generations. Each year we are joined for this occasion by a notable guest preacher, invited from across the denominations.



Our Common Fund contributions are always paid in full and our treasurer is able to manage the finances of the Church with a small annual surplus. A breakdown of the current income and expenditure for St. George's is available for all applicants to see.

For the past two years, under the enthusiastic leadership of a member of the congregation, a dedicated team has been using wool donated by sheep farmers in the parish to make an impressive series of pew runners of individual design. This voluntary work has attracted attention and support from outside the parish. The congregation is proud of what the volunteers have already achieved and can expect to see the whole church equipped with new runners by the end of 2019.

The project has generated some well-supported social occasions, including notably a summer barbecue attended by local neighbours and well wishers, which is likely to be repeated each year.

A group of bellringers performs on special occasions and often at routine services and in other churches. The organ has recently been refurbished, is regularly maintained, and there are three experienced organists available to play for regular services and at other times.

The church has recently had its quinquennial inspection and is in good repair. Wiring has been renewed and under-pew heating installed.

The churchyard is well maintained, with a profusion of wild flowers at various seasons. From the main gate there is a 150-year-old avenue of trees, which are regularly inspected and maintained.



*Volunteers with one of the pew runners*