

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY WEXHAM



Parish Profile 2013

Church Lane, Wexham, Buckinghamshire, SL3 6LH

www.stmaryswexham.co.uk

Our little Church, with the accumulated worship of years within its ancient walls, is much loved by us and visitors speak of the warmth and friendliness of the congregation. The following will introduce you to the people of St. Mary's

Over the last 10 years St. Mary's has achieved a great deal:

- Our previous House for Duty Priest helped many of us to deepen our personal faith, to recognise our God-given gifts and to use them in His plan for us. We continue to put them to good use, which also enriches our lives
- Worship at St. Mary's is varied and compelling - Ministers from outside the parish come to preach and lead worship as, on occasions, do the Bishop of Buckingham, the Archdeacon and the Area Dean
- Clergy and lay-led monthly evening services were introduced and are still very much appreciated. They replaced weekly Evensong, which had become less popular
- Although we don't have an in-house organist, two excellent organists play for us when they can. If neither is available we resort to the less inspirational CDs from 'Hymns Old & New'
- Caring for the congregation and valuing everyone, whatever age they are, continues to be very important to us
- We have a small lay team who offer home Communion and monthly Communion Services in The Pines, the new Sheltered Housing complex, and the Care Home, Oak House, which is within the same development. The arrangement at Oak House is shared with other churches
- A member of our congregation is now licensed to preach and her sermons are much appreciated
- Every 5th Sunday in the month, instead of 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, there is lay-led Morning Prayer
- House Groups led by members of the congregation continue to thrive and grow. Two evening services organised by one group discussed the theme of God's Message in Pop Music
- We now have well supported men's and women's fellowship groups. Each group has planned and held its own Evening Service, reflecting the individual nature of its members
- Once or twice a year Sunday lunch for the Church family and friends is arranged at a local restaurant



Sunday lunch at the Fox & Pheasant

- Our dedicated team of Sunday School leaders continues the excellent work of introducing the children to the themes of worship which are happening during the regular service
- We have a Web Site which is increasing in popularity, which we try to keep up-to-date. It includes a copy of the Parish Magazine, boosting circulation from around 220 to many more
- On a regular basis and at special events, the Friends of St. Mary's continue to raise funds for the upkeep of the building and fabric of our Church and Church Hall

In the future we hope to:

- Reach out in new ways to embrace the community and make St. Mary's better known
- Develop closer links with schools, toddler group and chosen charities
- Attract people of all ages to join us and experience the love of God (including those whom we recognise may not become regular churchgoers)
- Ensure every person feels a valued part of the congregation
- Establish connections with other faith groups in order to deepen our understanding and respect for one another

In five years' time we would like St. Mary's to be a much more vibrant and sociable presence in the community.

whilst continuing to:

- Receive guidance and encouragement on our spiritual journeys through life
- Be helped to deepen our faith through a rich variety of church services, house/study groups and lay involvement
- Be open to exploring some new initiatives in worship
- Be encouraged and guided in the use of our God-given gifts
- Care for our congregation.
- Receive support for our new minister from the Diocese and Clergy in the Deanery, in the same way they supported our previous minister

for our part we will:

- Share with them in the work for ministry

And last but by no means least, we look forward to hearing the ideas our new incumbent will bring when they join us.

We would like a dynamic House for Duty Priest, who will:

- Be a 'door-opener' and encourage us to build relationships with young and old across the wider community. The congregation are more than happy to take on some of the lesser responsibilities in order to release this person to be the 'door opener'
- Be as enthusiastic as we are about our desire to reach out to our neighbours and introduce them to the joys and challenges of being part of the family at St. Mary's – helping us to find ways to build up the core congregation
- Work with us to help and inspire us to discover new ways of taking the message of Jesus and God's love to those who live in our Parish
- Understand that we value the worship we have at St. Mary's whilst, at the same time, being open to some new initiatives
- Encourage and guide us on our individual journeys of faith and show us how we can walk more closely with God – e.g. by leading study groups, Lent and Advent Courses
- Deliver down to earth sermons to help us understand aspects of Christianity by connecting the stuff of life with the message of the Bible
- Be energetic, outgoing and a good communicator at all levels
- Have good pastoral skills and value the way in which we care for and about one another
- Have the ability to delegate in order to maintain a good work/life balance
- Give guidance on how we can realise our ambitions and help to fulfil them

Our House for Duty minister will be expected to work 3 days a week, including Sundays. Days worked in the parish can be negotiated and would particularly suit someone wishing to work part-time in another sphere, or a priest who may wish to juggle child care whilst benefitting from a family home. The flexibility around the role we hope will be attractive to a priest at any stage in their ministry, with plenty of energy, whether male or female.

Pastoral Organisation

The Parish of Wexham has been suspended for a good number of years to enable a House for Duty Priest-in-charge to minister here. As there are no immediate plans for pastoral reorganisation, it is anticipated that in the next few years the suspension will be lifted to enable the appointed priest-in-charge to become House for Duty Vicar.

INTRODUCING ST. MARY'S

Our Church



Evidence suggests that there has been a church on the site of St. Mary's since Saxon times but the oldest part of the current building dates back to the 12th Century. It is a Grade II* listed building and holds up to 90 people. The last quinquennial inspection carried out in 2012, confirmed that the building was well maintained.

OS Reference – SU99249 81508 GPS – Lat 51.523773 Long – 0.570686

The Churchyard

The Churchyard was closed for burials in 1999 but we continue to bury ashes in the limited space available on the edge of the paths. While we have a policy in keeping with the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations, we acknowledge that it is widely ignored in relation to the building up of individual plots and mini-gardens. The Churchyard is well maintained thanks to the volunteer help of church members.

The Church Hall

Our Church Hall, built 50 years ago to provide a large worship space and a place of recreation for the community, has been used for quizzes, concerts, etc, and, of course, for the chance to chat over coffee after 10.00 a.m. Sunday Services.

The Paddock

The Paddock, or grass area behind the hall and churchyard, is the responsibility of the Diocese. At the entrance to the Paddock are the old Stables and Coach House, which are used for storage of mowers, etc. The Paddock has been used for large outdoor events, such as Summer Fêtes.

The Worshipping Community

St. Mary's has the advantage of being a small church, the size creates a feeling of togetherness and that is reflected in the congregation, whichever service they attend. We have a full lay team covering welcoming, serving, reading lessons, and leading intercessions, with a quarterly roster also organised by lay members of the church. A recently retired stipendiary priest lives in the Parish and would be happy to work with the new incumbent in enabling the variety of worship to grow and continue at St. Mary's.



Our churchmanship could perhaps be best described as middle of the road with our theology as broad as the variety of our congregation.

While our position as it appears on our web site was penned by our previous incumbent, the PCC continues to uphold its sentiments: ‘As a Christian community we share a belief that we are all on a spiritual journey, to which the God who created the universe is drawing us closer to him, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Our journeys are different, the ways in which we are all called are varied and our views on the controversial issues of the day are many. We are united however by our sense of wonder that, with all our faults, God loves each and every one of us: no-one is beyond his love: no one can earn his love: no-one can lose his love. This is the good news, we believe, Jesus Christ lived and died to proclaim and it is the message we seek to communicate’.

Mission and Ministry

Over recent years the focus of our ministry has revolved around the 5 Strands of Mission developed by Oxford Diocese as part of its Living Faith Initiative. The Diocesan strategy is deliberately ‘fluid’ allowing individual Parishes to work with them as seems best in their own particular situations. The strands are:

- Sustaining the Sacred Centre (2010)
- Making Disciples (2011)
- Making a Difference in the World (2012)
- Creating Vibrant Christian Communities
- Developing Confident Collaborative Leadership



This has helped us focus as a church.

GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH ST. MARY'S

Sunday School



Sunday school takes place in the Church Hall during the 10.00 am service. We have a team of two leaders and four helpers who are committed to working with young people. The children have lots of fun with storytelling, arts and crafts, cookery, and games to teach them about the Bible and learn that God loves them. They join the Church service to receive a blessing and sometimes to share with the adults what they have been doing. All ages, including babies and toddlers, are welcome with or without their parents.

Friends of St. Mary's

The Friends were formed in the early 1990s to bring together people interested in the upkeep of the building and fabric of the Church and Church Hall. Although a very small group, we raise funds both on a regular basis and also at special events during the year. Over the years The Friends have supported many projects.

Parish Magazine

The Parish Magazine is produced monthly by an editorial team of three. We aim to have a mix of religious and secular articles, the majority of which are contributed by members of our congregation. We try to lighten the tone by the inclusion of appropriate jokes. The magazine is used to keep the Parish informed of forthcoming events and special services. It is assembled each month by a small team and delivered by hand throughout the Parish by a dedicated team of distributors. At the time of writing, we print 230 copies each month.

Men's Fellowship

When St. Mary's had a curate, our incumbent asked the curate's husband to form a men's fellowship group.



The idea was well received and since then, once a month, approximately 12 of us meet at a local restaurant/pub for a meal or we have a takeaway in the Church hall. Occasionally a barbeque is arranged. Various topics are discussed ranging from world issues to particularly inspiring 'thoughts for the day', heard on the radio. The group is open to Church and non-Church goers and one of the lay evening services has been arranged by Men's Fellowship, with great enthusiasm.

The 'Belles of St. Mary's' Women's Group

'The Belles' have adopted a little prayer: *'Our living and loving Lord, please help us to get to know one another and to recognise You in those we meet.'*

This is why we formed the group in February 2012 and each month we relax, chat, and eat together at a local restaurant. We advertise in the Parish Magazine so quite often one or two people from the wider community join us, which is pleasing. Topics discussed have included *how love and compassion can change lives, cultivating good relationships and 'wow' experiences in God's creation.* The structure of the group varies, but on average 17 women attend.



POLICIES

St. Mary's has PCC approved policies which are available to be read in detail on the website. The Health & Safety policy is still to be finalised.

All policies have been discussed and updated by the PCC recently, both to provide a basis for informed decision-making during the interregnum and to give a new incumbent a clear picture of current practice. They are not intended to 'bind' our future incumbent in any way.

WORSHIP AT ST. MARY'S

Sunday Services

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion – Common Worship Order 1, Traditional Language
A quiet said service. Average attendance – 14
5th Sundays and during the Incumbent's holidays – lay-led Morning Prayer

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion – Common Worship Order 1, Modern Language
Average Attendance – 45
Sunday school (average 5 children) meets in the Church Hall, joining the congregation to receive a blessing during Communion
1st Sundays – All Age Worship
Average Attendance – 40

Monthly

6.30 p.m. A variety of services loosely based on A Service of the Word
Average Attendance – 25
In addition to 3/4 Reflective Services (with hymns) these have included Songs of Praise and Holy Communion with Prayer for Wholeness and Healing. Taizé, God's Message in Pop Music, Belles and Men's Fellowship Services have all been lay lead

Vestments are currently worn at most services.

STATISTICS

The Occasional Office statistics fluctuate from year to year but there are signs of a downward trend in funerals. Figures for the last five years are as follows:

Year	Funerals	Weddings	Blessings	Baptisms	Naming Ceremonies
2008	38	1	0	8	0
2009	29	9	1	3	2
2010	29	6	0	10	4
2011	29	6	0	6	3
2012	18	8	1	2	3

Electoral Roll figures for the last five years:

2009 – 135 2010 – 130

2011 – 136 2012 – 141

2013 – 109

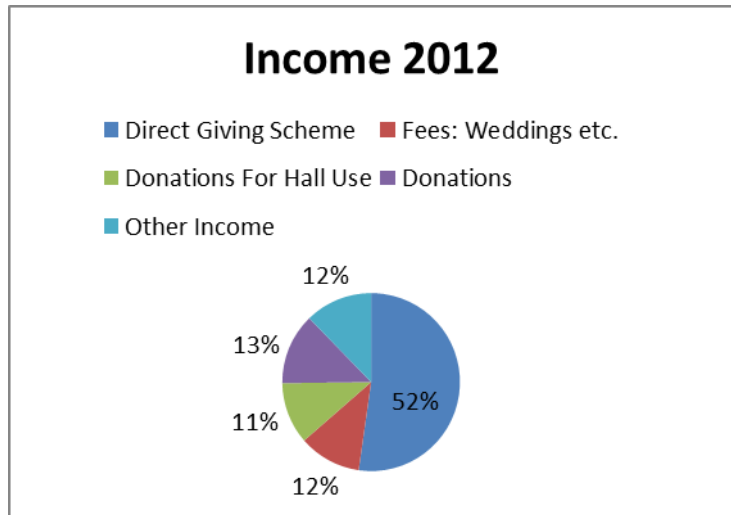
Average 'normal' attendance over all Sunday services is around 65 + 5 children.

FINANCE

St. Mary's Income and Expenditure 2012

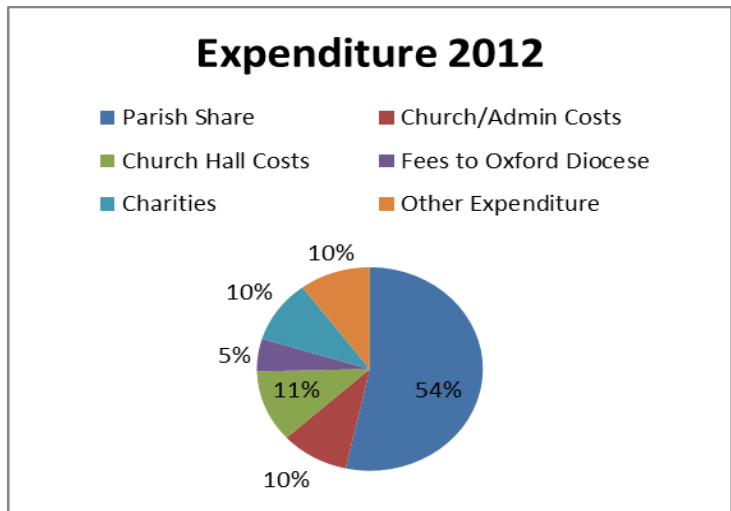
INCOME 2012

Direct Giving Scheme	£28,370
Fees: Weddings etc.	£6,162
Donations For Hall Use	£6,085
Donations	£7,022
Other Income	£6,663



EXPENDITURE 2012

Parish Share	£25,897
Church/Admin Costs	£4,733
Church Hall Costs	£5,533
Fees to Oxford Diocese	£2,495
Charities	£4,872
Other Expenditure	£4,928



For the current year 2013, the forecast of Income is anticipated to be below last year due to less use of the Church hall.

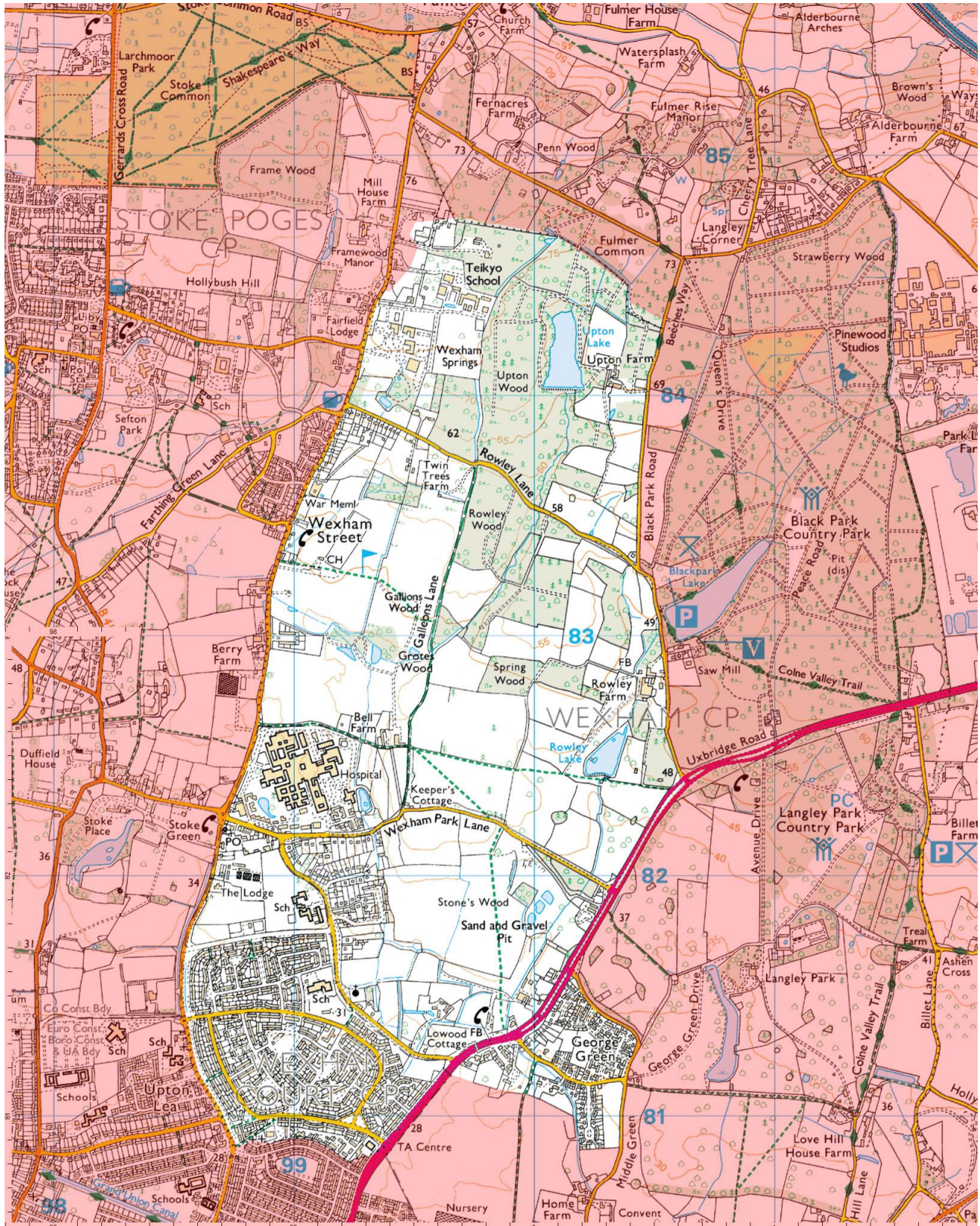
ST. MARY'S IN MINIATURE



As great as our Church and Church Hall are, the church is the people not the buildings.

INTRODUCING WEXHAM AND GEORGE GREEN

St. Mary's is a small Parish spanning the Buckinghamshire/Berkshire border. It is a single Church benefice and, since the suspension of the living 10 years ago, the incumbent has been a part-time House-for-Duty priest. The last census indicated a combined population of 4,500 souls.



The nearest shopping centres are Slough (2 miles) and Uxbridge (5 miles). There is easy access to the M4, M25 and M40 and good rail links to London (Paddington) and Reading. Also there is a link from Gerrards Cross to London (Marylebone). London Heathrow Airport is just 7 miles away.

The Rectory



7 Grangewood, Wexham, Buckinghamshire, SL3 6LP
OS Reference – SU 99349 81828 GPS – Lat – 51.526583 Long – 0.56925

The Rectory is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac of the parish and is a 5 minute walk from the Church. It is a modern 4 bedroomed house with family bathroom and en-suite, a large lounge, separate dining room, cloakroom, and a kitchen which was newly fitted 10 years ago. The study is at the front and positioned in such a way as to provide a degree of privacy for both the priest's family and visiting parishioners. The garden is of manageable proportions, fully fenced, and has been well, if simply, maintained.

Schools

There are two schools in the Parish, Wexham Court Primary School and The Wexham School (Secondary). Both are situated on the Berkshire side of the County boundary on the Wexham Court Estate. Residents on the South Bucks side of the Parish (including The Rectory), while having access to the local schools, often choose to access schooling in South Bucks. A system of selective schooling operates on both sides of the county boundary with tests being taken by pupils at 11+

St. Ethelbert's RC Primary School is located just beyond the Parish boundary. Khalsa Primary (Sikh) School and Iqra Primary Islamic School have been opened in recent years, both being situated just beyond the Parish boundary while the Teikyo School, a small independent school for Japanese students, is located in the Parish.

Hospitals

Wexham Park Hospital (NHS) and Spire Thames Valley (Private) are both situated within the parish. Wexham Park has its own team of Chaplains.

Leisure Facilities

A wide range of leisure facilities is to be found in the local area. These include a sports centre, ice rink, 10-pin bowling, plus a number of well-known golf courses. Wexham also offers its own Golf and Bowls Clubs. Stoke Poges Fitness and Well Being Centre and two country parks (Langley Park and Black Park) are also situated just beyond the Parish boundary.

Faith Communities

The Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Redeemer is situated just the other side of the Wexham Road Parish boundary while one of the two Sikh Temples in Slough and the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses are both in the Parish. We recognise that, subject to the gifting and calling of our new incumbent, the future ministry of St. Mary's may involve building up links with the local faith communities.

THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

The Diocese of Oxford serves the mission of the Church in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The Diocese comprises more than 600 parishes, with over 800 churches, serving a diverse population of more than 2 million people located in all types of settings.

Our Diocesan Bishop is the Rt Revd. John Pritchard. Due to the size and complexity of the Diocese, we also have three Area Bishops who exercise considerable strategic oversight for their Episcopal areas. The Bishop of Buckingham is the Rt Revd. Alan Wilson who has been the Area Bishop since 2004.

Growing out of the previous Diocesan vision and values statement called "Sharing Life", in 2009 Bishop John launched the revised Diocesan vision entitled "Living Faith for the Future", aimed at encouraging holistic mission and spirituality at the heart of daily life. It contains five key values which inform our strategic directions:

- Sustaining the sacred centre
- Creating vibrant Christian communities
- Making disciples
- Making a difference in the world
- Shaping confident collaborative leaders

These values are built on the principles of not neglecting the past but building on it; not so much about strategy but culture; not top down but liberating the local; not targets but directions; not about structures but about relationships; not one size fits all but flexibility and not about complexity but elegance.

Sustaining the sacred centre was the focus for the Diocese in 2010, with Making Disciples in 2011. In 2012, the emphasis moved to Making a Difference in the World.

Full information on Living Faith for the future can be found at www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/projects/living-faith/

It is expected that all clergy appointed into the Archdeaconry of Buckingham will want to commit themselves to Diocesan vision and strategic directions.

Burnham and Slough Deanery

The parish of St Mary's Wexham is located within the Burnham & Slough deanery. Since the implementation of synodical government the deanery has developed a strong sense of working together. Church tradition across the deanery is diverse and, like other deaneries of a similar size, we are enriched by the variety of worship that takes place daily and weekly within our thirty places of worship. The deanery is a mixture of

rural, semi-rural and urban parishes with one formal LEP working together to build up the life of the church locally.

The Burnham & Slough deanery recognises the importance of outreach to the wider community and many of our parishes are actively engaged in mission activity that brings them into regular contact with the wider community. For example, we have strong links to the many schools in the area, including a number of Church of England schools, some of which are unique in terms of their student population. We also have strong links with our statutory and community service providers. Being part of a diverse community has given rise to some important inter-faith work, alongside some essential community development initiatives resulting from engagement with the Local Strategic Partnerships in Slough and South Bucks.

Like all deaneries we respond to the changes that the National Church is facing at this time. Deanery re-organisation has brought us into four groupings of churches - three formal group ministries and one informal group of churches working together in the East of the deanery. Our total ministerial resources serve to lead these groups in their ministry and mission activity. This structure requires flexibility and for people to work much more collaboratively together. Needless to say, anyone new to the deanery would be expected to work within this structure and be part of this way of working.

Below is shown numerically how our current ordained ministerial resources are deployed across the deanery.

Jubilee River Group Ministry

3 Stipendiary Priests (2 vacancies)
2 Curates in Training
3 Retired Priests (with PTO)

Southern Group Ministry

7 Stipendiary Priests
1 Curate in Training

Northern Group Ministry

5 Stipendiary Priests
2 Associate Priest
2 Retired Priest (with PTO)

Eastern Group of Churches

2 Stipendiary Priests
1 House for Duty Priest (vacancy)
1 Curate in Training

St Mary's is part of the Informal Eastern Grouping which comprises of Wexham, Iver Heath and Iver.

Deanery Post

In 2013, the Deanery appointed its first full-time Area Dean.

Ecumenical/Inter-Faith Hospital Chaplaincy Team

Appointed chaplains working out of our two main Hospitals of Wexham Park and Heatherwood (not part of the Deanery stipendiary allocation).

Note: Our Licensed Lay Ministers (13 in number) work in our parishes/benefices/teams with one licensed to work across the whole of the deanery.

This deanery is an exciting place to exercise ministry and mission. Those who work here tend to stay for a number of years. The area covered by the deanery has a very diverse population. It has places of affluence as well as having wards that are some of the most deprived in the country. Because of this the deanery is one that throws up many challenges. Our local churches rise to these challenges, showing that they can respond to most things that come their way.

Are you being called to serve with the people of God here in this deanery?