

Benefice of Rowde and Bromham



Rowde
St Matthew

Bromham, Chittoe and Sandy Lane
St Nicholas, Bromham
St Mary the Virgin and St Nicholas, Sandy Lane

Parishes together in rural Wiltshire
In the Deanery of Devizes and the Diocese of Salisbury

Profile for the appointment of Rector

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the position of parish priest for the Benefice of Rowde and Bromham, part of the Ramsbury area of the Diocese of Salisbury. This is a half-stipend post and a super opportunity for creative ministry as part of a dynamic and friendly deanery, within one of the most beautiful parts of Wiltshire.

The ancient see of Ramsbury, covering much of that county, is rich in spiritual heritage, from the cathedral city of Salisbury and the valleys of its five rivers, up to the Marlborough Downs. God is in this place – even though many know it not – and it offers an enriching context for ministry and mission today.

I am looking for devoted and visionary clergy, who can inspire and guide our communities in Making Jesus Known - our new diocesan vision statement. While this can appear a timeless landscape, our parishes are constantly changing and face all the challenges and opportunities of life in the 2020s. Because of this, the church must also change in order to grow, renewing its traditions for the contemporary situation.

These are, then, times of transition for the market town and village churches of Wiltshire, which I sometimes liken to the oak trees of the Savernake Forest near my home, which gradually join their root systems to survive individually. Churches must likewise learn how to be collaborative 'beneath the soil' to flourish above ground in their own particular setting.

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we place a high value on the encouragement and pastoral support of our parish clergy and, should God guide you to serve here, you will become part of a committed and friendly team.

Please contact the Ramsbury office if you need any assistance with your enquiry and be assured of my prayers as you seek the Lord's will for your future.

Sincerely in Christ,

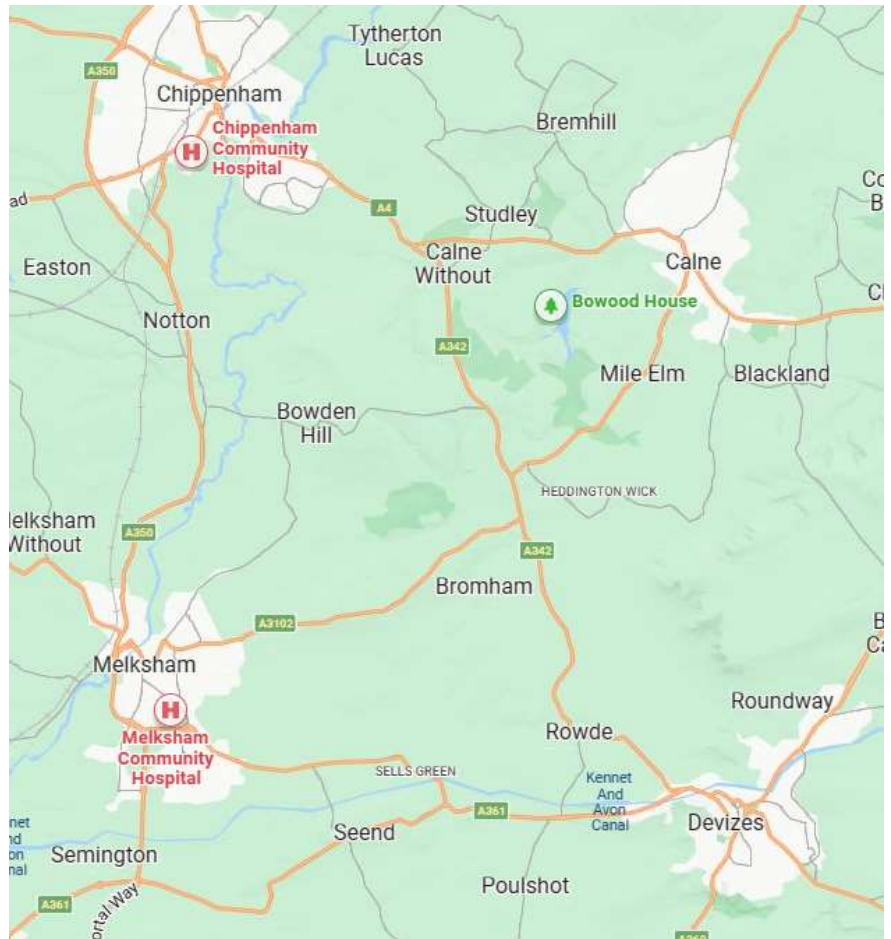


The Rt Revd Dr Andrew Rumsey

Where We Are

We are glad you're reading this profile and perhaps wondering if God is calling you to this exciting role in the Benefice of Rowde and Bromham.

The Benefice is a very pleasant place in which to live and work. It is located in attractive countryside between the towns of Devizes, Calne, Melksham and Chippenham. Both villages have a strong sense of community and have a selection of pubs, retail outlets and primary schools. For other facilities residents can choose between the four local towns, which are connected to the villages by bus. There are good transport links to the motorway network, Chippenham and Melksham both have railway stations and Bristol has an international airport. The surrounding towns offer a



range of good shopping, secondary schools, leisure facilities, dentists and doctors' surgeries. The larger town of Swindon and the cities of Bath, Bristol and Salisbury are within easy reach. Minor Injuries Units are situated in Trowbridge and Chippenham, with major hospitals in Bath, Bristol, Swindon and Salisbury. Devizes has an NHS Treatment Centre and a new NHS state-of-the-art health care facility which opened in 2022.

Our churches are open every day with displays of information in the porches as well as inside the buildings

Our Vision And Mission

To make our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved throughout the Benefice of Rowde and Bromham through the life of his Churches by:

- being a focus of worship and prayer for all;
- demonstrating God's love through the way we live;
- being at the heart of our communities;
- seeking opportunities to reach out and involve people in God's purpose for the world;
- offering friendship, fellowship, prayer, support and pastoral care for everyone;
- growing in spirituality by offering teaching on Christian faith and life;
- embracing diversity;
- continuing to develop our work with children and young families;
- continuing to develop our collaboration as a Benefice and with surrounding parishes.



Who And What We Are

Leadership – Our Benefice has small but strong leadership teams, who bring with them the fruits of their experiences in worship, buildings, fundraising and finance. We also have a part time Administrator to support our Incumbent and Associate Priest. While we can sometimes disagree on approach, as Parochial Church Councils we are committed to furthering the work of Christ in our Benefice.

Each parish has a church with enviable history (both are mentioned in the *Domesday Book*). We also have a unique wooden and thatched church in the hamlet of Sandy Lane. While the parishes and churches each have their own traditions, they work collaboratively on Benefice-wide matters.

Worship – Across the Benefice we have both traditional and more informal and modern styles of worship. We are open to change and diversity though not at the cost of some traditions. Non-Eucharistic services are often lay-led, we use the same service booklets for most services. We also have a “Growing in Faith” group exploring faith and examining its various issues. This group moved to Zoom during the Covid pandemic and has no plans to change this arrangement at present. All our churches are members of the Small Pilgrim Places Network. Our current pattern of worship has changed since the pandemic and this pattern has been maintained during the current vacancy with joint services to put less strain on our Associate Priest and retired clergy who have supported us in order to maintain as many of our normal services of worship as possible.

Children and families

We have a “Little Angels” parent and pre-school child group at Bromham who meet in the church twice a month and other venues for special events. It has proven very successful and is an important first step in bringing young families into church. Our Palm Sunday, Christingle and Christmas Eve crib services attract large numbers of families with young children.

Outreach

The Benefice Mothers’ Union plays a vital role in the life of our churches as well as the wider community. Through its work in the Benefice it organises and funds holidays for under privileged families.



Both parishes have strong links with their parish councils often hosting events in our churches as well as at other venues and offering mutual support.

The Friends of Bromham and Sandy Lane churches and the Friends of St Matthews church are groups which raise and manage funds to assist in the maintenance of their churches and improvement of their fittings, furnishings and amenities.

We view pastoral care as a crucial part of ministry in the Benefice. We have a small number of trained Lay Pastoral Assistants and would like to see more of these to support the Incumbent and Associate Priest during the planning and running of baptisms, funerals, weddings and home communion.

Schools

Both our parishes have primary schools. Rowde is a Church of England Academy and Bromham is a Church of England voluntary controlled school. Both schools have strong links with their churches and have a number of services in church throughout the year. There is a programme in each school of regular involvement by members of our congregations to spread the teachings of Jesus through buddy reading and the weekly "Open the Book" programme.

Social life

Our churches enjoy a wide range of social events such as harvest suppers, concerts and musical evenings, coffee mornings, Lent lunches and cream teas. St Nicholas church also hosts the Bromham Bash which is a fun evening of local entertainment, the Carnival Songs Praise, an annual Christmas tree festival, and a biennial flower festival.



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What We Offer

You will be ably supported in our Benefice by very committed Parochial Church Councils, our Associate Priest and a part-time Church Administrator working six hours per week. You will also enjoy the support of those who lead lay worship and a small number of Lay Pastoral Assistants, as well as many willing and able members of the congregation supporting aspects of church life. You also have the support of your Deanery and Chapter colleagues.

Church Finance

Each parish in the Benefice has its own treasurer and is responsible for its own finances and produces its own accounts. All our churches have been able to pay their Parish Share in full and are well supported by their congregations through standing orders, plate collections and donations even with a slight fall in numbers on the electoral roll. Both our PCCs' accounts have restricted and endowment funds for specific purposes and reserves that future proof our finances.

Bromham has a charity called the Bromham Church Estates Trust which has three properties in the village. The income can only be used to maintain the properties and cover major building costs for the parish church. It can also be used to assist the PCC with insurance and energy costs. The new Incumbent will be one of the trustees of this charity.

Accommodation

The Rectory is in Bromham High Street and close to the parish church and village amenities. The Rectory is a substantial and well-maintained modern four bedroomed detached family house. There is a generous garden, large garage and ample parking. Downstairs there is a large study, with direct access from the porch, and a good sized living room, dining room, WC, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room and access to the garage. There is gas-fired central heating and hot water.



A Vacancy Prayer

Lord, as we seek a new priest may you give us open hearts,
Grace to grow in the faith of Jesus Christ
and help us to serve you in our local communities.
Lord, bless and equip the person you are preparing to lead us here.
May they have vision and insight and a prayerful and pastoral heart
to serve young and old alike. Amen.

Appendices

Our New Priest

We are seeking and praying for a priest who will take us forward in our mission. We are looking for someone who:

- can embrace our traditional services of worship and develop new and innovative worship to meet the changing needs of our parishes;
- is a collaborative leader who will work closely with our Associate Priest and identify and develop gifts among our PCCs and congregations;
- can apply the Bible to everyday life and equip people to deepen and develop their faith in Christ and grow in discipleship;
- is able to foster partnership working across the Benefice;
- has financial awareness and organisational skills;
- has a compassionate nature and an understanding of the pastoral needs of a rural community;
- will help us to grow spiritually and continue to serve others;
- will continue to build and maintain strong links with our schools.

Our Churches

St Matthews Church, Rowde

This Grade II* listed building and its churchyard are places of beauty. There has been a church on this site at least from the time of the first recorded Rector in 1326. By 1400 AD the church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was rebuilt and all that remains of the 15th Century building is the tower. In 1833, the church was re-dedicated to St Matthew. The South and North Aisles were added in 1860, and in 1871 a new North porch was added. St Matthews is open every day from 10am to 4pm.



We have a joint Facebook page for the churches in the Benefice:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/439328832796693> Our entry on A Church Near You is: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9690/> The electoral role stands at 48.

St Nicholas Church, Bromham

The church is Grade I listed. It is a beautiful building with a fascinating mix of architectural styles including Norman, English Gothic, small elements of Tudor, and Victorian. The church we see today was founded in 1076 and completed by 1084 and has been extensively added to and altered over the centuries. It has many fine features including the 15th century polychrome ceiling of the Bayntun chantry chapel (recognised as one of the most important in the country) and a fine early William Morris east window.



The Irish poet Thomas Moore is buried in the churchyard and his memorial attracts many visitors from Ireland and America. St Nicholas' church is open every day 9am to at least 5pm. The electoral role stands at 40.

St Mary the Virgin and St Nicholas Church, Sandy Lane

To counter the rise of Methodism, a site was given by Captain Wyndham of Wans House to build a wooden and thatched church in the hamlet of Sandy Lane at the cost of some £200 and this was completed in November 1892. The building seats up to 50 people. Services of Holy Communion BCP are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month with additional services at Easter, Advent and Christmas. The electoral role stands at 14.



The musical life of our churches has changed as neither of the churches has a resident organist but do have a number of organists who can be called on for occasional offices and some services. Our music is generally provided by digital and computerised means. Both St Matthews and St Nicholas have choirs which support each other and both churches have a committed band of bellringers.

Monthly Benefice Pattern of Services

First Sunday:	8am BCP Communion/Morning Prayer, Rowde 10am Holy Communion, Bromham
Second Sunday:	8am BCP Communion/Morning Prayer, Sandy Lane 10am Holy Communion/Morning Worship, Rowde
Third Sunday	10am Holy Communion, Bromham
Fourth Sunday	8am BCP Holy Communion/Morning Prayer, Sandy Lane 10am Holy Communion, Morning Worship, Rowde
Fifth Sunday	10am Holy Communion/Morning Worship, alternating between Rowde and Bromham

The Deanery

Devizes Deanery is made up of 26 parishes within a ten-mile radius of the town of Devizes. There are three parishes serving Devizes and the remaining parishes are more rural in nature. There is a Deanery Strategic Plan (2021-2026) which sets out four strategic actions which are:

- Children and Young People (CYP)
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- Finance
- Community Engagement and Presence
- Buildings

The Clergy Chapter has an important role in providing mutual support, prayer and encouragement for all the clergy across the deanery.

The Diocese

The Diocese of Salisbury is a Christian community of churches, schools and chaplaincies serving one million people, stretching over 2000 square miles, from North Wiltshire to the Jurassic Coast and Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey.

We're one of the most geographically diverse Anglican dioceses, covering a wide range of landscapes, from rural villages to large towns and cities.

For more than 900 years we have been a regional presence of the Church of England, with a history of serving our communities. Today, as always, we are committed to encouraging people to explore their faith in Jesus Christ and discover how God's love can transform lives. We hope that you will join us in this important conversation.