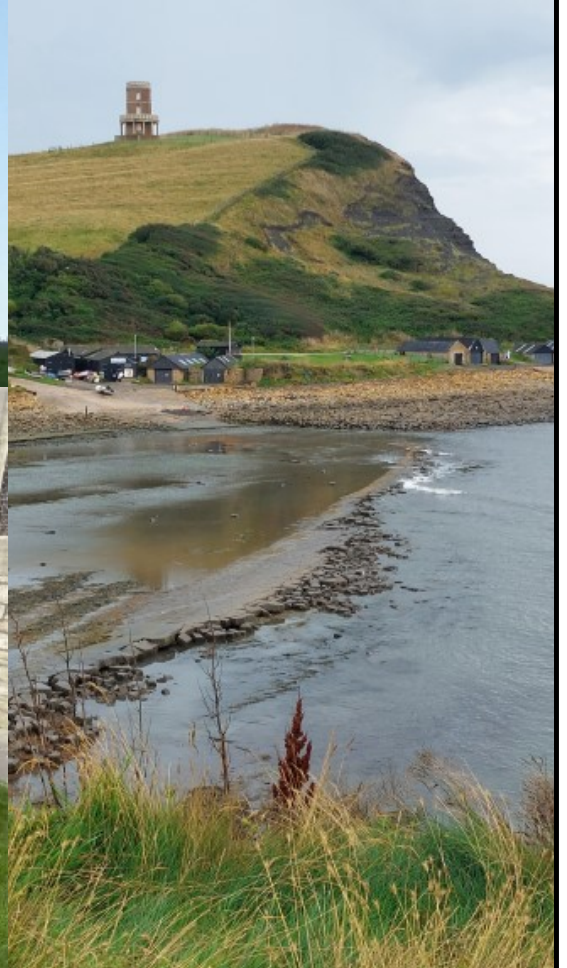
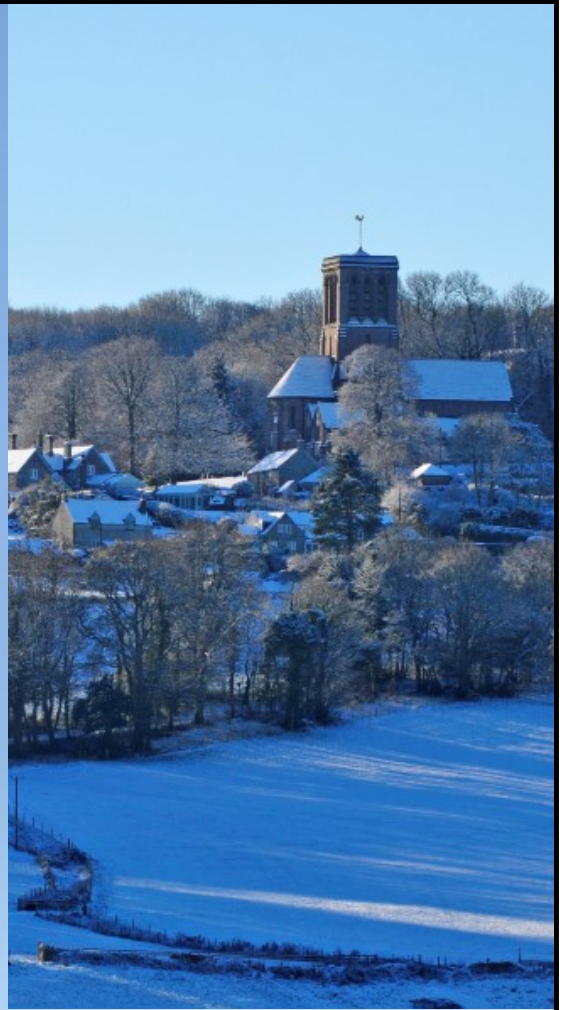


THE BENEFICE OF ST ALDHELM Profile 2024



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Rector of the Aldhelm Benefice

Introduction to Vacancy by the Bishop of Sherborne

Ministry in Dorset is a joy and a delight. In recent years significant changes have been made in the way clergy are supported and encouraged, leading to a greater sense of collegiality in our rural and urban areas.

The Purbeck Deanery, in which the St Aldhelm benefice is situated, encourages collaborative working by ensuring that benefices in the north and south are shaped for mission as well as for mutual support and fellowship. The recent bringing together of the Corfe Valley and the Purbeck Hills benefices demonstrates this, with ordained and lay ministers working together to build on what God is already doing in those places to and plan creatively for the future.

There is a renewed sense of working together; therefore we are looking for an experienced, collaborative leader who will develop a creative, mixed ecology around the villages of central and coastal Purbeck: building on the best of each church building, the skills of congregation members, and on the many opportunities around. The new and traditional both have their place here, and a Rector who can embrace both, as well as get to know the people of Purbeck, will find their place easily in this beautiful part of the country. The villages of the Purbeck Hills benefice have recently formed one Parish, with the aim that this pattern could be repeated elsewhere in the benefice to enable greater working together, and a sharing in ministry and mission. The Rector will need to relate to all ages, including those in Corfe school, and be willing to travel around the benefice in order to become known in each place.

The congregations enjoy working and occasionally worshipping together, and there is a huge opportunity to reach out to visitors, second homeowners, missing generations, local businesses and home workers; and to develop church in new ways, as well as working in partnership with organisations across the benefice, including the National Trust. The opportunities around the environment are also exciting with Planet Purbeck firmly established and having much support in the rural areas.

The clergy team continues to grow, with the appointment of an Associate priest last year who is self-employed, and the appointment of a “House for Duty” interim pioneer priest who will be based in Langton Matravers in Spring 2024. Both bring new ideas and creativity, including “Walking Church” and the vision of linking with the local stone-carving centre.

This post offers some great opportunities for ministry and mission, supportive colleagues and communities, and a welcome in a friendly deanery amongst some wonderful countryside. In turn it demands hard work and commitment. Please feel free to talk through the post with the Rural Dean the Revd Richard Bartlett (01929 792633) or the Acting Archdeacon, Lucy Holt (07713 490076).

Bishop Karen

Introduction to the Purbeck Deanery

The Deanery of Purbeck is, as Bishop Karen describes, 'small and beautifully formed'! It covers an area of outstanding natural beauty and, more importantly, its churches are made up of engaging and mission minded clergy and laity.

It comprises just four benefices: The Swanage and Studland Team, The Wareham Team, The West Purbeck Benefice and The St Aldhelm Benefice; alongside an Army Chaplaincy in Bovington and West Lulworth. There is a keen sense of collegiality amongst the clergy who meet together regularly as Chapter for mutual encouragement and support. The Deanery Synod meets three times per year, and this year it will be focussing on the Diocesan Vision, 'Making Jesus known' and 'Engagement with our Church of England Primary Schools' – two of which are in the St Aldhelm Benefice; alongside a summer Eucharist and a time of fellowship for synod representatives.

This is a time of change in the full-time clergy within the deanery. Many of us have been in post for less than two years; others are moving on soon, and we look forward to welcoming two Curates to deanery at Petertide. So this is a time of building new relationships for the clergy, finding good and convenient ways to meet and share our common mission, and we look forward to welcoming the new Rector of the St Aldhelm Benefice into our midst, with your own good ideas! Alongside this deanery support, each of us also shares ministry with a variety of "House for Duty", part time, SSM and retired clergy colleagues, as well as a number of LWLs and LPAs. Your ministry in the St Aldhelm Benefice will be enriched by the ministries of Lindy Cameron, "House for Duty" Pioneer Associate Priest, who will move here in April, and Nick Webb, SSM Associate Priest, as well as, of course, some very committed lay people across the benefice, who have worked tirelessly particularly through the Vacancy.

I hope you will seriously consider this post, which lies geographically at the centre of Purbeck Deanery; and if you are the person whom God has chosen for this post, we look forward to ministry with you soon.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be in touch with me:

Email: vicar@westpurbeck.org.uk

Telephone: 07711 701910

The Revd Canon Richard Bartlett, Rural Dean of Purbeck.

Section One: Welcome and Summary of the Profile

Our task:

- **To spread the Gospel through the way we live, speak, behave and worship, within our own congregations and communities, while also embracing those who visit us in both.**
- **For the churches to be a blessing to the communities of which they are a part, and to apply its principles for the good of all people and our precious planet.**

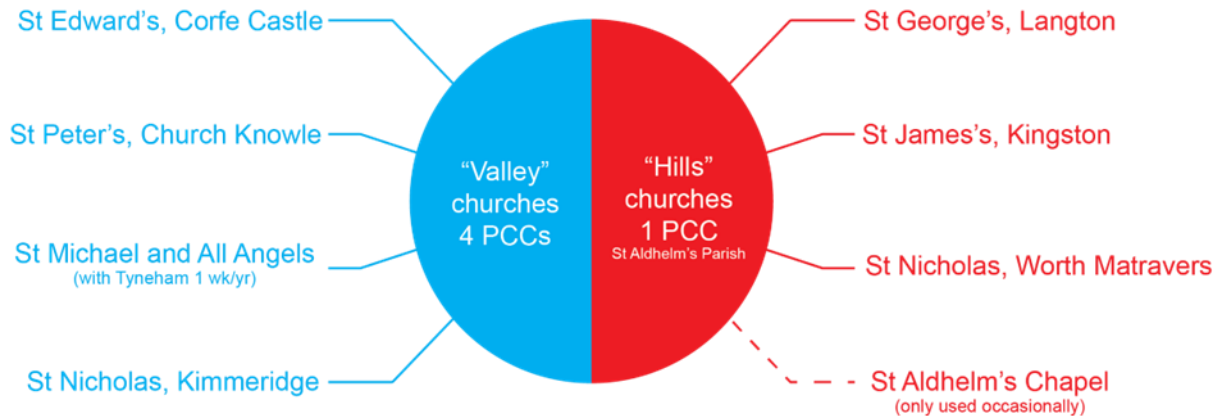
Welcome to the Parish Profile of the St. Aldhelm Benefice. We aim to give you an insight into our church and community life. We are situated in a beautiful, rural part of the country, and you would be able to rely on supportive and welcoming churches as well as thriving village communities. To the east are situated Bournemouth and Poole, while Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove, Dorchester and Weymouth are to the west. Purbeck forms the eastern end of the Jurassic Coast.

We are hoping to appoint a new Rector for the St. Aldhelm Benefice. The Rector is in overall charge of the Benefice and is also a Governor of Corfe Castle Primary School.

There are 7 main churches in the Benefice and 2 which are used occasionally.



ST ALDHELM'S BENEFICE



- The “Corfe Valley Churches” of St. Edward’s (Corfe Castle), St. Peter’s (Church Knowle) St. Nicholas (Kimmeridge), and St. Michael and All Angels (Steeple, along with St. Mary’s at Tyneham), have remained as four grouped parishes, each with its own PCC, treasurer and associated officers. (NB the whole of Tyneham village was requisitioned in 1942 for military purposes, and although the church remains in reasonable condition, all the houses are ruined and uninhabitable, and no one lives in the parish.)
- The “Purbeck Hills” parish, now called ‘St. Aldhelm’s Parish’ was created in 2021 and includes St. George’s (Langton Matravers), St. James (Kingston), St. Nicholas (Worth Matravers) and St. Aldhelm’s Chapel. The PCC is formed from representatives from the different churches. ([Link](#))

The vacancy has given the Valley parishes in particular the opportunity to work more closely together, and this may pave the way to a more formal co-operation.

In the Benefice there are 2 primary schools, 7 pubs, a hotel, excellent local food stores, several restaurants, and plenty of places to visit. A new incumbent could also look forward to a great variety of local events.

We are hoping to attract a Rector who will provide leadership in an active church life, bring faith alive to all age groups, and encourage lay involvement.

Below are comments suggested by members of our church and village communities.

The Best Things about our Benefice

- The communities of the various churches are committed, welcoming, enthusiastic and hard-working.
- There are strong links between the church and the community, and the churches are well regarded within their communities.
- Our churches are kept open to visitors, and ‘the timeless serenity’ of each of our churches offers a place of reflection and peace.
- There has been a continuous thread of worship throughout our churches over the centuries. We are blessed with repeat-visits by those who have come to the villages on holiday with parents or grandparents, and also those who come to celebrate anniversaries of weddings and baptisms, or to remember those who have died.
- We offer diversity in worship, and we offer support for people through prayer groups, house-groups and Bible study.
- Both St Edward’s and St George’s have a lively musical life, with enthusiastic choirs and organists who support our worship. Kingston has a dedicated organist, and Kingston, Worth and Corfe Castle also have dedicated bands of bell ringers.
- Church services, buildings and events attract many tourists. They provide popular wedding venues for people near and far, thus giving the opportunity for a wide ‘spreading of the Word’.
- It is a beautiful and uplifting area in which to live. The Jurassic Coast and the extensive National Trust lands, along with the RSPB sanctuary at Arne, make it a great place to explore.
- We offer great hospitality!

The Top Three Challenges

- Supporting all-age provision in our church communities.
- Finding ways to develop our common life in the Benefice; socially, learning and worshipping together, and in service to our communities.
- Developing a wider/global sense of social justice and mission.

Section Two: The Broader Context

The Rector will be able to depend on a high degree of help from all of the churches in the Benefice. There are also three Lay Pastoral Assistants and one Lay Worship leader. There are ecumenical groupings of clergy and lay leaders in Wareham and Swanage, and the PCC of St. Aldhelm is part of Swanage Churches Together.

Nick Webb – Associate Priest

I'm Revd Nick Webb, married to Naomi and we have 3 young boys together. I'm a Self-Supporting Associate Priest in the St Aldhelm's Benefice. I work full time as a garden designer, but I am committed to working within the community across the benefice churches in a variety of ministries which vary from traditional services and occasional offices to Fresh Expressions. I have lived in Purbeck for over 20 years and love being part of the vibrant and eclectic communities which we have here.



Lindy Cameron – Associate Pioneer Priest



I come as an Associate Pioneer Priest into a house-for-duty post with permission to develop an intentional community within the Rectory. As I arrive at the Langton Rectory, I am seeing a ten-year vision come to pass. A mixed ecology of church with traditional services alongside the rhythm of a Franciscan-inspired community at its centre, with us joining in with the local community and all it is already engaged with; and also welcoming them to join with us and what the developing community in the house can bring to the table – always being open to the Holy Spirit in what plans God has for us all as we journey together. I come to join Associate Priest Revd Nick Webb, who I have worked well with before, and who has already established both Walking Church and Breakfast Church in the Benefice.

Deanery Chapter meetings are well attended and there is creative collegial working across the deanery. The churches are mostly in a good financial state, aided by fund-raising activities during the year. (See links: [St. Edward's Kimmeridge Steeple](#) [St. Aldhelm Church Knowle](#)).

Much work was done in 2019 regarding the life at St. Edward's in Corfe Castle, and the link to the document 'Progress in Faith' is attached. The implementation of the report has been delayed due to COVID-19, but the outcomes and suggestions are still relevant. ([Link](#))

St. Aldhelm, Langton have also worked on a Mission Statement. ([Link](#))

As a Benefice, we have not had the opportunity to explore 'Living in Love and Faith'. There will no doubt be differing views held within our congregations, but we hold our differences well.

Section Three: The New Team Rector

What we will offer

- We will give the person appointed the opportunity and support to use their gifts in the Benefice churches and village communities.
- We will offer a variety of administrative and practical support through a Benefice website, the 'iKnowChurch' software, 'e' newsletters, and church members who help with the upkeep of the churches.

Skills and gifts we would value in a new Team Rector

- ❖ **A skilled leader who is able to work with our team of both clergy and laity to develop a sense of togetherness across the 7 churches, respecting their individuality whilst also working collaboratively:**
 - ✓ Someone who can develop others in leadership.
 - ✓ A team player.
 - ✓ Someone who is "Kind"; "Approachable"; "Enthusiastic".
- ❖ **Someone confident in leading worship in a variety of styles, and a skilled communicator able to engage all ages and stages of faith:**
 - ✓ A person who can be an inspiring role model in our local primary school; engaging with and supporting the families of the school children, governors and staff at the school.
 - ✓ A good and empathetic forward-thinking communicator of faith and community care.
- ❖ **Someone who values our beautiful buildings and can help us to discover how we can continue to use them creatively as spiritual places within our community:**
 - ✓ An imaginative person who can suggest ways in which we can enhance our offerings to visitors and our congregations.
- ❖ **A person who is able to grow to love rural life; who can integrate with, and be a visible presence within, our communities:**
 - ✓ Someone who likes to be involved in village life.

Section Four: About the Benefice

The statistics about Purbeck are included below, but the most important thing about the area is that it is a wonderful place to live. People often retire here after many years of coming here as children, and they bring with them many happy memories. Others come to enjoy the beauty and the slower pace of life – although having said that, there is plenty going on in all the villages!

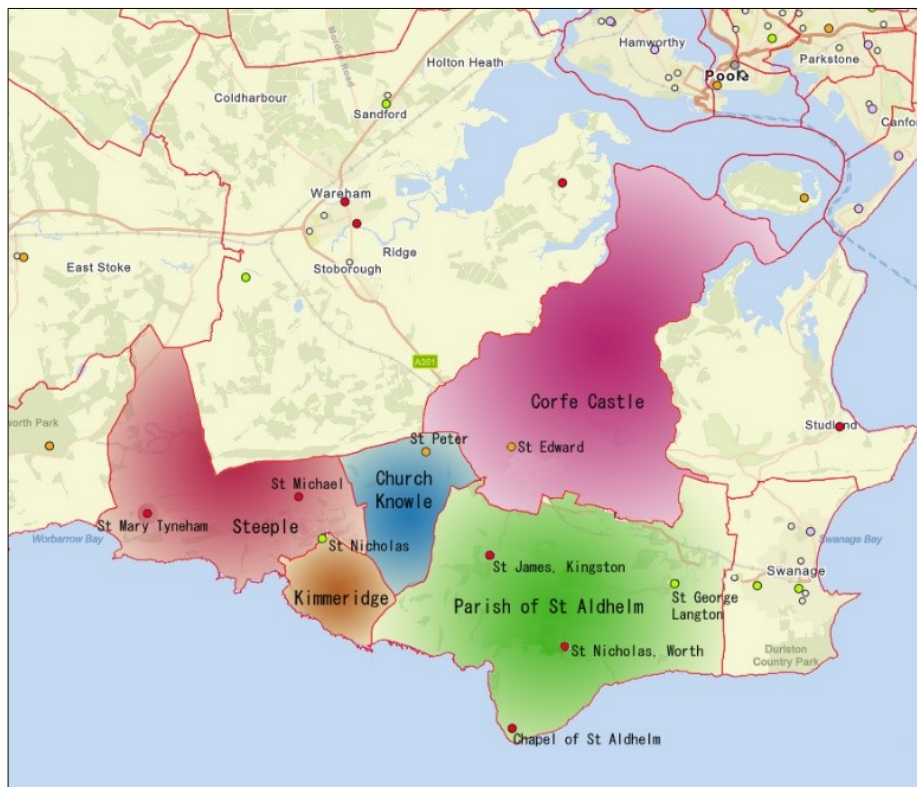
Location

The Benefice of St. Aldhelm is located within Purbeck, a location designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Purbeck is a district of Dorset that takes its name from the peninsula known locally as the 'Isle of Purbeck'.

This sixty square mile chunk of land jutting into the English Channel is bordered on three sides by water and, although not actually an island, has the distinct feel of one.



The Benefice Parishes with their Churches and Chapels



How the Benefice works.

Usual service pattern for the whole Benefice

	First Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday	5 th Sunday
Corfe Castle	HC 10.30	Morning worship 10.30 Lay-led	HC 10.30	HC 10.30	Benefice HC Church Knowle 10.30
Church Knowle					
Steeple		HC 9.30			
Langton	Late Breakfast Church 10.00	HC 10.00 Evensong 18.00 Lay-led	Morning Worship 10.00 Lay-led	HC 10.00	
Worth	Celtic Evening Prayer 17.00 Lay-led	HC 8.00	Celtic Worship (Eucharist) 10.00 Lay-led	Celtic Morning Prayer 10.00 Lay-led	
Kingston		Informal Worship 11.15 Lay-led		HC 11.15	
Walking church			11.00		
Harmans Cross (village hall)			Evening prayer 18.00		
Kimmeridge	Occasional HC, Holy week and Christmas service				

The 7 churches each have their own role to play in the life of the Benefice and we are working towards a greater co-operation between all the various parishes. We will, in time, hopefully lose the 'Hills and Valleys' description as we merge more fully, but for now it is a useful description to explain the Benefice.

There is a part-time Parish Administrator, based at St. George's, Langton Matravers, who deals mainly with St. Aldhelm's Parish.

Our Benefice churches are well supported by their congregations, and in the Vacancy, people have taken on additional roles to help. Each church has its own strengths and areas for development. There are a number of lay leaders in the Benefice all supporting a wide variety of services, as can be seen above.

All the churches have a limited number of young people attending services, although both St. Edward's and St. George's have extremely well attended Christingle services. More people come for 'High Days and Holy Days' than attend regularly.

Under the direction of Richard Earl, the organist and choirmaster at St. George's, we have formed a 'Festival Choir' which comes together at key times of the year to rehearse and perform at specific services. This brings in both church and non-church members, and their efforts are much appreciated by those who attend.

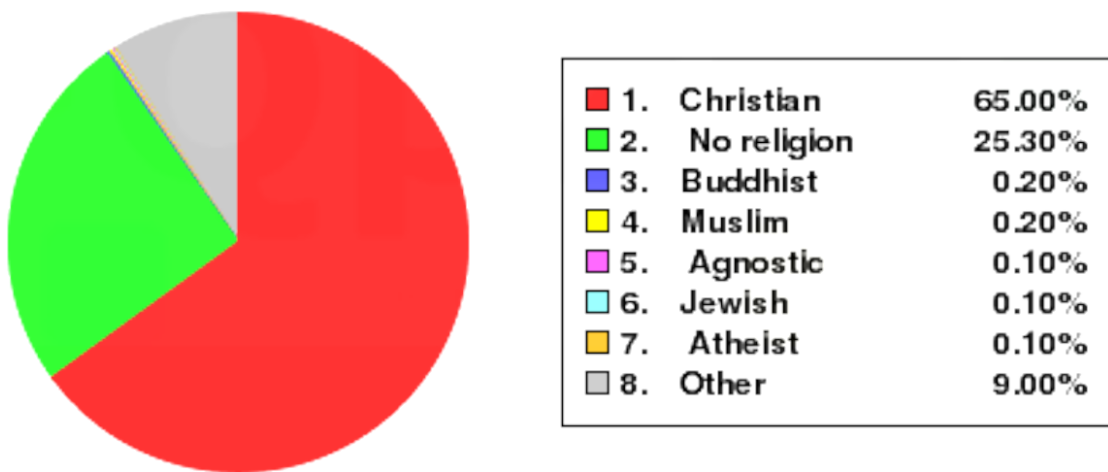
The Local Community – Purbeck Demographics

The latest census records the population of Purbeck to be 44,973, made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. In Corfe Castle, under-40-year-olds constitute 24% of the population, and therein lies one of our challenges, because these numbers are not reflected in the composition of our congregations.

The average age of people in Purbeck is 45. The Purbeck locality is largely rural with a higher proportion of older people compared to both the Dorset and national average. Housing growth in rural Purbeck is minimal, although the need for affordable homes is high. The 2011 census found that Purbeck has the seventh-highest rate of second home ownership for holiday homes of all the Local Authorities in England and Wales.

55% of people in Purbeck are retired. [Link](#)

Religious affiliation statistics for Purbeck:



(Data taken from Dorset Council Website)

Section Five: About the Churches and the Benefice



As the new incumbent will be living in Corfe Castle, there follows a description of life in the village and what it has to offer.

Corfe Castle Village

Corfe Castle is a popular tourist and holiday destination. The local full-time resident population is nearly 1,400, and there are a number of second homes and holiday cottages in the village. During the summer months there can be traffic congestion, but the many visitors create a lively, bustling atmosphere in the village, and the St. Edward's church fête in August is a popular visitor attraction. Some regular visitors even plan their annual holiday around the date of the event.

The church sits in the centre of the village and naturally attracts visitors. We try to make sure they always find a warm welcome. Several people come to St. Edward's when they are on their regular holidays, and otherwise keep in touch through the live-streamed services and newsletter. Our visitor book is full of comments from people who have appreciated the peace and tranquillity they find in the church in the midst of a busy village:

"A place of quiet deliberation and prayer."

And, from a 7 year old visitor, "I think it's lovely, buterful (sic) and calming."

The village consists of a variety of housing; from affluent private homes to charitable, subsidised, and social housing with a socially-mixed community ranging from retired people to young and working families. The cost of housing can be an issue for some local young people.

The National Trust is a major landlord in the village, having been bequeathed the castle, land and properties in and around the village in 1982. There is a good working relationship between the village and the National Trust, which has a representative at the village Parish Council. Residents have free access to the castle, and during recent national celebrations for the King's Coronation, the castle was shut for the day to visitors so that the village could hold the celebrations there. The annual May Fair is also held at the castle.

Corfe Castle has two main streets: East Street (A351) and West Street, the latter accessed through the main square by the castle. The village facilities are centred in and around the square and a little along both main streets. Corfe Common, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, lies at the end of West Street but can also be accessed from East Street.

The walks around Corfe Castle and Purbeck are spectacular, ranging from sandy heaths to chalk downs, rolling farmland, and the limestone cliffs of the Jurassic coast.

There are four pubs, three cafes, one newsagent, a newly opened deli, a bakery, and various gift shops. The village is very well served by a wonderful Village Store/Post Office. The Swanage steam railway is a major attraction, as well as the Dorset Adventure Park nearby. Corfe Castle surgery is well regarded and consistently ranks in the top 20 surgeries in the country for their patient feedback. They are proactive and look after the villagers very well.

Corfe Castle Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Church school with nearly 100 pupils. It is part of the Multi Academy Trust, Coastal Learning Partnership. The Rector takes assemblies and school church services. It is hoped that ways can be found to involve school children more broadly with the worshipping life of the church, and for any mission to include their parents too. The church has good links with the school, and each term there is a service in church during school-time. The school has always played a big part in the St. Edward's Christmas concert.

There is also a pre-school, a children's playground, Sports Pavilion, Community Library and a large Village Hall. Both the Sports Field and the Village Hall host regular community-based events: football matches, plays, concerts, films, quizzes, coffee mornings, lectures, dance and fitness courses. The local drama group, 'Double Act', is very active with regular performances. Many people come to the area expecting to become involved in voluntary work, and that is evident in the wide-ranging groups throughout Purbeck.

The Evangelical Congregational Church is just by the green (known as 'The Halves') between East Street and West Street. They currently hold fortnightly services.

There is a monthly booklet (and an online version), 'The Corfe Valley News', which serves all the four valley parishes ([Link](#)). It provides information relating to forthcoming events, Parish Council news and administrative issues. It advertises local societies and businesses, and has articles of local interest, including several pages from the Benefice which give information about Bible readings, church services, and general news, as well as including writings and thoughts from our clergy.

We are fortunate in Corfe in having access to village and Purbeck-wide societies which are not connected to the church, although many church people are members of the different societies, ranging from gardening to Pilates, and dance to football clubs. A "Soup 'n' Pud" Saturday lunch takes place once a month. The latter was started in the winter of 2022 to help those perhaps struggling during the current cost-of-living crisis.

There is a strong community spirit in the village and St. Edward's aims to reflect that. We hold events throughout the year: a winter quiz, coffee mornings, Grand Raffles, the August Fête, and a Christmas Concert which closely involves our village school. The church acoustics are good and we have hosted several concerts.

There are many opportunities to volunteer in the church and in the wider community; during COVID-19 lockdown the people of the whole village came together to support each other.

As a church, we have a committed choir and all services are live-streamed. We offer refreshments after the Sunday Service, and monthly fellowship lunches (weekly during Lent). During lockdown we set up weekly online Thursday 'coffee mornings' to chat, keep in touch, and keep our spirits up. These have continued ever since, and involve people from Corfe, Langton and Swanage.

The Village of Corfe Castle seen from West Hill



St. Edward's, Corfe Castle

The Church as a Worshipping People

“A calm space and a welcoming church in the middle of a busy tourist village”

2023 statistics

Electoral roll	Average Sunday attendance	Weddings	Baptisms	Funerals	Village population	Parish share and % paid
82	35 - 40	10	5	6	1300	£26,000 100% paid in advance

- The service pattern can be seen on page 8.
- We have a keen choir which leads the congregation in all normal services in the church, and our organist leads choir practice every Wednesday evening.
- During the recovery period after the COVID-19 lockdown, we introduced live streaming of our regular services to support those who, for medical reasons, were advised not to attend. The initial ad-hoc arrangement proved successful, so we have invested in installed equipment, and continue to stream our services for those unable to attend.
- Our churchmanship could be described as ‘central’.

Congregation

- The majority of our congregation are over 55. We also frequently welcome visitors, and many come back regularly to worship with us. We have recently welcomed a younger family to our regular worship, and both their children have become involved – one in the choir and the other as a sides-person and lesson reader.
- Easter and Christmas services are very well attended by the local community and those visiting the village for the holiday.
- We have a Children’s Corner which is used both by families during services, and also by those visiting the church during the week.

Study and Prayer Groups

- There is a fortnightly Bible Study Group, based on various biblical themes.
- The Prayer Group meets weekly but has not yet returned to pre-COVID numbers.
- There would be scope for a new incumbent to lead a parish ‘away day’ for parishioners to further grow and learn together.
- During Lent, we have Lenten Lunches every Wednesday, with homemade bread, soup and cheese, for which donations are given for charity. This has been well received, and we now meet once a month for fellowship and food.

Churchwardens

- We have 2 very dedicated wardens who complement each other in their strengths, and who have led us well up to and during the Vacancy.

Administration and Responsibilities within Church

- Much of the routine administration has been carried out by the Rector, with support from the congregation on an ad-hoc basis. With the approach of his retirement, we have moved to become more structured in our approach. We have found volunteers to lead in many areas of the organisation of the church life, in addition to our pre-existing groups (e.g. the Events Committee). The attached list demonstrates that we have a keen and supportive congregation ([Link](#)).
- To help keep things going during the vacancy, we have recently invested in the Church-of-England-approved software programme 'iKnow Church' in order to give us an accessible and secure core of key information. We are still exploring its usefulness.
- We have a Life Events co-ordinator who deals with all Wedding, Funeral and Christening enquiries, and who is also supporting the other smaller churches in this area.
- We regularly use the Order One service as set out in the Common Worship Book, although there is a small number of people at St. Edward's, and also in other churches in the 'valley', who would be delighted to see an early morning BCP service.



Corfe Castle and St. Edward's Church throughout the Year



The Church and the Community it Serves

- Most weddings are from outside our immediate congregation. After having being married in church, couples often bring their children for baptism, which is a pleasing continuity. Some couples make the effort to come back to services when they can, but as they often don't live in the parish, this is difficult for them.
- We are fortunate to have 2 dedicated vergers who between them help at weddings and funerals, and have a good working relationship with the undertakers. Our flower arrangers keep the church looking beautiful and can be called upon, if needed, to help with weddings.
- We have an enthusiastic band of bellringers who ring on Sundays, and also for special events such as weddings.
- Our Events Committee plan various events throughout the year, and this forms the basis of our fundraising. We attract both church and non-church members to our events, which are well supported by the church and village.
- Our fête has become a highlight of the year. Some visitors have been known to plan their annual holiday around the date of our fête!
- The church is open every day and there is a fairly constant stream of visitors. Some come just to look but many have a previous link to the church. Our visitors appreciate the aura of calm in the church and they take time to pray or unwind a little. Many will engage in conversation and are keen to hear about church and village life. We have information boards to explain certain aspects of our church life and history, and our noticeboard in the porch includes both church and local events. Our Prayer Tree is well used and is an opportunity for visitors and locals to share concerns and hopes.
- In the past we have shared Good Friday services with the Congregational Church, but this ceased when their pastor left, and has not resumed since the period of COVID-19.
- We tend to support charities on a 'one off' basis and people are very generous. We have 'twinned toilets'; and supported the Emergency appeal for Ukraine, a local hospice, and the Swanage Foodbank, to name but a few. Historically, we have not given consistently to one particular mission or charity, although a new church member has highlighted the need for ongoing prayer and giving for the situation in the Middle East.

The Church, Building and Resources

- St. Edward’s is listed grade 2*.
- The church is primarily used for the weekly Sunday services, but is a popular occasional concert venue because of its good acoustics, capacity and location.
- We have in mind the need to update the building (in particular the provision of toilets and a better kitchen), but the village is well served by other community buildings, so there is limited scope for broadening the usage base.
- The St. Edward’s Church building is in reasonable condition, but there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the short to medium term; in particular, those concerning the south-aisle roof and ceiling.
- The cost of building maintenance over the next few years is likely to rise significantly after a period of low expenditure.
- We have a small team, members of which set aside Wednesday mornings to look after minor and immediate tasks around the building and churchyard.
- We pay all legitimate working-clergy expenses, and expect our Rector to take proper holidays and days off. In addition, we would support them as they take time for training, personal development, and an annual retreat.
- Housing: The existing rectory will be the initial residence of the new Rector, but work is already underway within the Diocese. In discussion with the new incumbent, it is hoped that a more modern property may be found within a reasonable timescale.



Bell Ringers



Bishops’ Visits



Brides & Grooms

Corfe Castle CE School

'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.' (1 Peter 4:10)

Welcome to our school – Corfe Castle CE Primary School, part of the Coastal Learning Partnership

Corfe Castle CE Primary School is set in the heart of the village of Corfe Castle. It is the smallest school in our Partnership and was built in 1895. A lot of the original stonework is still present in our little Victorian school. One of my favourite features is the fire places in the classrooms. As you park your car, you overlook green fields, and if you are lucky enough, you can see the steam train glide past at the bottom of the school field. As you walk through the playground, you glance towards your right and can see the historic Corfe Castle in the distance.



From our most recent SIAMS inspection:

- Well-planned and diligently co-ordinated support from a diverse range of local church leaders is enhancing collective worship and the spiritual life of the school.
- Exemplary partnership working with local churches enriches and enlivens collective worship and the spiritual life of this small school. A diverse team of clergy and ministers from different Anglican, Salvation Army and United Reformed churches, and an Open-the-Book team, lead and enrich worship. Aably co-ordinated by a school leader, this team works very closely together to plan acts of worship. Regular planning meetings, such as a leaders' brunch, involve staff and clergy, and ensure that worship is varied yet cohesive. Pupils' evaluations of worship reflect their enjoyment of this variety. They recall with enthusiasm, for example, the 'kind and happy' storytelling of the rector, and the 'fun' Open-the-Book sessions. Adults mention being 'made to think' in clergy-led collective worship.
- Inspired by the vision, the current leaders have been quick to identify opportunities to re-establish these relationships, for example through holding our sports day in the castle grounds. In partnership with the church, leaders hosted a 'warm space' in school. They supported their active PTFA in hosting a community screening of the Coronation. As a result of initiatives like these, the number of adults joining pupils in church for special services has increased.

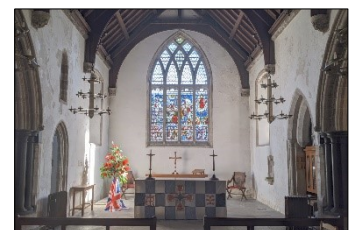


As a church school, we work towards building further spiritual awareness and development for our children, and we see engagement from our local clergy to assist in challenging, guiding and supporting our children to become aware of themselves and the world around them.

We are always excited by how open our children are at accepting the world around them, embracing change and difference with open arms and respect.

Our connection with the church includes:

- Church services held by the school for Christmas, Easter, and Harvest Festival
- Joining with Sunday services at Christmas
- Presence on Remembrance Day
- Use of the church to talk about its role as a building and as a repository of icons
- Visits to the school from the clergy



St. Peters, Church Knowle

“An idyllic, friendly and pretty village with a picturesque 13th century church and charming village pub all within four miles of the Jurassic coast.”

2023 statistics

Electoral roll	Average 5 th Sunday attendance	Weddings	Baptisms	Funerals	Village pop.	Parish share and % paid
5	35-40	1	0	1	120	£4257. 41% paid. Unlikely to be able to pay 2024 share.

The Church as a Worshipping People

- At present the Church has one Church Warden, a secretary and a treasurer, each of whom are on the six-member PCC.

The Church and the Community it Serves

- The most important aspects of church community are endeavouring to keep a caring presence in the community, looking after the building itself, and trying to engage with non-churchgoers.
- The village includes a high proportion of retirees and second home owners but unfortunately, at present, there are no families with young children.
- Within the village there is a well-run village hall with its own committee who run social events, including table tennis, quiz nights, and luncheons for special events such as the Platinum Jubilee and Coronation. The Parish Council runs the very well-equipped playing field which is popular with visiting grandchildren. The Margaret Green Foundation Charity is run as an animal sanctuary. The New Inn is a charming village pub popular with tourists and locals. The Reading Room, which holds coffee mornings every Monday, is run by its own committee and is available as a smaller venue than the village hall. Corfe Valley Outdoor Learning, run as a care farm, is a place for children of all ages who are, for a variety of reasons, not able to attend school. It is a place where they can learn, and be in touch with nature and animals.
- The largest fundraiser of the year is The Three Parishes Fête, which takes place in The Old Rectory grounds and is for the benefit of the three parish churches of Church Knowle, Kimmeridge and Steeple. It is held on the first Saturday in August each year and raises about £3,000 for each church, with another £1,000 going to local charities.

The Church, Building and Resources

“Cnolle” in Saxon, says Hutchins in his book of Dorset, signifies the top of a hill or ascent, and it can be inferred that there was once a Saxon Church here. Hutchins tells us there was a priest here and consequently there must have been a Church. As there is no other instance in which a priest is mentioned in the Domesday Book in connection with any place in Purbeck, it is probable that, from the very early establishment of a Church here, the place became known as “Church Knowle”. The thirteenth century Church’s list of rectors dates back to 1327.

- The church is Grade 2* listed.
- The greatest challenge to St. Peter’s is the ongoing problems with the roof. It is currently surrounded by scaffolding, and has just received permission from the DAC for the work to continue.
- There is £15,000 in a restricted fund for a bell-restoration project.

The Churchyard is no longer in use.

The cemetery behind the Church is run by the Parish Council.



St. Michael and All Angels, Steeple

“A church in a peaceful, rural setting. Small, beautiful, with a fascinating history – and dog friendly!”

Linked to Steeple is St. Mary’s Tyneham – a church in a deserted village now used for Remembrance. When the villagers were evacuated during the Second World War, they left a sign on the church:

“Please treat the church and houses with care. We have given up our homes, where many of us have lived for generations, to help win the war to keep men free. We will return one day and thank you for treating the village kindly.”

They never did return but, poignantly, the church is still used once a year for Remembrance services.

“Here is calm and peace, unsullied by the modern world”

The Church as a Worshipping People

2023 statistics

Electoral roll	Av Sunday attendance	Weddings	Baptisms	Funerals	Village Population	Parish share and % paid
27	15 – 60 (festivals)	1	1	1	184	£6000 paid in full

The church at Steeple is deeply cherished by its varied and active congregation, who work very hard to preserve its qualities and who understand and love the BCP. Steeple is a beacon of Christian stability in an uncertain world.

It is worth noting that Revd Ian Jackson’s final service and farewell, combined with the Christening of our newest member, lasted from 9.30am until lunchtime, such is the fellowship and goodwill abundant in the congregation. Owing to the increased workload of the Rector, regular worship has, to our regret, been reduced to once per month and is based on the Book of Common Prayer. Nevertheless, the church is much loved and well kept. According to frequent comments in the visitors’ book, many people find peace and tranquillity in the church. A substantial number of Americans also come to explore the tangible link with their own history, and many loyal holidaymakers also regularly return to visit the church. With a new Rector, one aspiration might be the reinstatement of occasional evensong when possible. Steeple is particularly well attended from all over the benefice at Christmas and Easter. Importantly, it is very well supported on every worshipping Sunday of the year by a loyal and affectionate congregation.

The Church and the Community it Serves

The Parish of Steeple with Tyneham is situated at the western end of the Purbeck Hills. Steeple is a small hamlet (of 5 houses) with the church at its centre. (The village and church at Tyneham are now part of the M.O.D ranges, and we bear no responsibility for the upkeep and running of that church, although we support Remembrance Sunday services there.)

Congregation members from both inside and outside the parish care for the church, supporting the PCC, ensuring that fresh flowers regularly decorate the church, and operating an annual cleaning programme. We are lucky to have a regular organist, and coffee after most services. Emphasis is put on encouraging the young and welcoming the whole community, looking to the present and future, but maintaining the beauty of the traditional form of service.

The Church, Building and Resources

The building of St. Michael and All Angels was started in Norman times and enlarged and improved in the 14th, 17th and 19th centuries. With its distinctive tower, it is a cherished part of the living landscape and heritage of the valley. It also has interesting links to America, due to the Lawrences of Steeple, who emigrated there, and whose coats of arms are in the church and were incorporated into the American flag.

Whilst generally in good condition, it has some important maintenance needs which are being addressed by the PCC and congregation. (We have just managed to secure a grant of £15,000 for essential work.) Members of the congregation are deeply involved in helping with annual fundraising, particularly through Steeple Manor Open Gardens and the “Three Parishes Fête”, which regularly raises in the region of £3,000 per church for Steeple, Kimmeridge and Church Knowle.

The Challenges

One distinct challenge is that of finding ways to engage the young so that continuity of worship is assured for future generations. Given our unique size in a tiny hamlet, and our somewhat isolated position, this is more difficult than in more built-up areas. Nonetheless Steeple is flourishing, and in a great position for the years ahead.



St. Nicholas of Myra, Kimmeridge

“The area is famous for fossils, water sports, rock pooling, Clavell’s Tower, and its oil well, complete with nodding donkey!”

Electoral roll	Regular congregation/Christmas Eve	Weddings	Baptisms	Funerals	Village pop.	Parish share and % paid
5	4/60	1	1	2	120	£2,579 paid in full

The Church as a Worshipping People

The church has held monthly services over the summer period which do attract some visitors, but the regular congregation is very small. The exception to this is Christmas Eve, when the Nativity Service sees the church packed, and with excellent involvement from the local community.

The Church and the Community it Serves

Many of the cottages in the village are rented from Smedmore Estate. This has meant that, unlike much of Purbeck, we still have a mixed community, with families and children as well as older retired people. There are a few holiday and second homes, but these are very much in the minority. The village has the well-known Clavell’s Restaurant and The Etches Collection fossil museum; the latter having an international reputation with many visitors. The museum also has a large meeting room which doubles up as the Village Hall. The village has a history of volunteering, with a Coastguard Rescue Team, and also Ambulance Community First Responders.

We can offer a venue for special events/services in a rural setting that has good acoustics (no PA needed), and also people with experience of organising events.

The Church, Building and Resources

Kimmeridge Church is Norman in origin, and was extensively rebuilt in 1872. Little remains of the original building except the 12th century doorway, 13th century porch and a plain 12th century font. The church building is a simple rectangular structure, but it has a good acoustic balance, and in recent years it has been used for concerts.

The Challenges

There is generally a low level of regular Church involvement, and as the church is isolated, getting there can be tricky in bad weather. There is also no toilet, and the building is likely to need re-wiring in the near future.

26 Kimmeridge Village and the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra



The Parish of St. Aldhelm, which includes:

St. George's, Langton Matravers

"A vibrant church in the heart of the community."

St. James, Kingston

"The 'cathedral' of the Purbeck Hills."

St. Nicholas of Myra, Worth Matravers

"A much loved and visited church in this old stone-quarrying village. A calm place at the centre of village life."

St. Aldhelm's Chapel

"A 'thin place' of stability and calm."

2023 statistics

Church	Electoral roll	Average Sunday attendance	Weddings	Baptisms	Funerals	Village pop.	Parish share and % paid
Langton	150 in St Aldhelm's Parish	28	2	1	9	842	£38,864. Paid in full
Kingston		11	3	0	2	Part of Corfe	
Worth		15	4	1	2	645	
St Aldhelm's Chapel		Only occasional	6	0	0	N/A	
Harmans Cross Village Hall		15 (once a month)				Part of Corfe	

The Churches as a Worshipping People

As there are several churches in the one parish, the descriptions below cover all the churches. There is an eclectic range of services in the Parish, from the more traditional to "cafe style" services. This ensures that all feel welcome and catered for. People appreciate the variety and support for different styles of worship. The churchmanship is central. Comments from parishioners include:

"It is an easy church in which to find your own place among people glad to have you there."

"The church is led by people eager to expand their understanding of their faith."

"A church that tries to make things happen for the benefit of villagers and for people we will never know."

Services across the St. Aldhelm's parish include:

- **A variety of services** from Holy Communion to Walking Church; Celtic inspired worship to a 'Church Plant' at Harman's Cross Village Hall.
- **As support for music and sung worship** St. George's Church maintains an excellent, four-part choir which supports the 10am Holy Communion services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month. Anthems and service settings are sung, and a rehearsal is held on Friday evening during the week before each service. In addition, The Festival Singers, augmented by singers from the village and other churches, sing at special services around the major festivals of Easter, Advent and Christmas.

Congregation

- A majority of the congregations have a majority over 55 years of age. There has been a decline in the attendance of children and families over the past decade. To some extent, this mirrors demographic changes within Purbeck, which is also reflected in the falling rolls of the primary schools in the benefice. The average age of the people involved in worship is at least 65. There are only a handful of people from out of the parish.
- There is a lay-led monthly craft and story activity in the church for St. George's Pre-School which currently has 12 children attending. Walking Church, held once a month in the Parish, attracts young families, and there can be up to 12 children aged under 14.
- There can be as many as 40 in the Easter/summer services at St. Aldhelm's Chapel, as well as good numbers for Remembrance at all the churches.
- The Christingle and 'Light up Langton' Services attract about 50 children.
- When there is a special sung service with the Festival Choir, about 40 people can be expected in the congregation, drawn from across the Benefice.

Study and Prayer groups

- A lay-led discussion group of up to 18 people meets for informal Bible study, prayer and worship on a weekly basis in people's homes. In addition, a clergy-led Lent course is offered, usually in the village hall.

Pastoral Care

Within the Parish of St. Aldhelm, 'The Prayer Circle' has the key pastoral oversight of church members and those from the wider community. The 'Prayer Circle' is led by a Licensed Pastoral Assistant supported by a team of thirteen people. They undertake to pray regularly for everyone in their care and to take heed of pastoral concerns. The Prayer Circle was of particular significance during periods of COVID-19 lockdown.

The Village of Langton Matravers and the Church of St. George



Churchwardens, administration and responsibilities within the church

- Following the creation of the Parish of St. Aldhelm, the parish has been organised so that there is a single PCC drawn from representatives of the 'Hills' churches. In addition, there are Community Teams which are sub-committees of the PCC and which report directly to it. There is an extensive range of responsibilities within this group, which means that the work is shared and the management of a large parish is achievable ([Link](#)).

The churches and the communities they serve

- All the churches are popular wedding venues. Couples and their families remain in touch and bring their children for baptism.
- There are a variety of social events which bring church and village people together, such as a Coronation Cream Tea, 'Pimms up the tower' in St. James, the annual fête, and an opportunity to 'Meet the Authors' at Kingston Country Courtyard.
- There is a good relationship with St. George's School which holds its main services in St. George's Church. Clergy go into the school to take assemblies, and Open-the-Book is held in the school by Swanage Churches Together.
- Langton and Worth Matravers churches have achieved silver 'Eco church' accreditation. The churchyard at Worth is managed by an energetic Eco Champion. Hedgerows have been laid, a sympathetic mowing regime maintained, and a beehive installed. Projects have also been set up with Sustainable Worth and landowners to 'rewild' land near the churchyard. The group works with DARN (Dorset Amphibian and Reptile Network) to monitor the population of slow worms in the churchyard. Church members have also been active in supporting the environmental groups Langton Planet Action and Planet Purbeck, and they work in partnership with the National Trust.
- We regularly support a missionary couple working in Nepal. The St. Aldhelm Christmas Tree festival, based at St. George's, raises money for local charities, and we organise appeals as circumstances arise. Church members have organised a large collection of goods for Ukraine and to support earthquake relief in Turkey.
- Members of the churches are actively involved in the life of the community, serving on village hall committees, the 'FareShare' community larder and 'Swanage Linking Lives'. Churches in the parish provide dropping-off points for food and provisions for the Swanage Food Bank.

The Churches, Buildings and Resources

The churches are well maintained and generally in good order. St. Nicholas, Worth Matravers, has recently received a grant of £250,000 from Heritage Lottery towards the rebuilding of the church roof, as well as with associated community projects. The local appeal was generously supported by the community and not just churchgoers.

There is a Premises Manager in each church with responsibility for the building. Work to be done in the short and medium term includes:

- St. George's (Grade 2 listed) – generally not too bad, but has a potential issue with the flat roof on the vestry; need for window replacements and to review the roof.
- St. James (Grade 1 listed) – a potentially major issue with water ingress through the West wall – being reviewed as part of Quinquennial.
- St. Nicholas – currently having the roof replaced, a £600k project.

The General Fund at the end of 2022 stood at £181,000, but there will be a substantial contribution to the Worth Roof project in 2023/24 of about £100,000.

In 2022, the General Fund had a deficit of £7,274 (mainly negative movement on investments), and the deficit in 2023 is expected to be about £12,000 (mainly due to necessary work at a rental property).

Current usage of the churches:

- St. George's is used for weekly Sunday and mid-week services, a monthly coffee morning, and a pre-school service. It is hired for concerts 2/3 times per year.
- St. James has twice-monthly Sunday services and is hired for concerts and film nights 3/4 times per year.
- St. Nicholas is used for twice-monthly Sunday services.

Further information about the individual churches of the parish can be found by following the links below:

St. George's Church, St. George's Close, Langton Matravers, Swanage BH193HZ ([Link](#))

St. James' Church, West Street, Kingston, Wareham, BH20 5LL ([Link](#))

St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Worth Matravers Swanage, BH19 3LQ ([Link](#))

St. Aldhelm's Chapel, St. Aldhelm's Head, Worth Matravers, Swanage, BH19 3LR ([Link](#))

Scope for new mission and ministry activity within the buildings

- St. George's and St. James' have flexible layouts inside and could be used for new activities. Once the roof on St. Nicholas is complete, there will be storyboards erected to bring in visitors and local schools to describe the history of the church and graveyard, as well as the surrounding nature and environment.

Routine and foreseeable costs of building maintenance

- Routine cost is about £2,000 per year per building, including fire extinguisher service, lightning conductors, PAT tests, EICR, and general wear and tear.
- St. James wishes to look at better heaters.

A Year in Purbeck at the Church of St. George in Langton Matravers

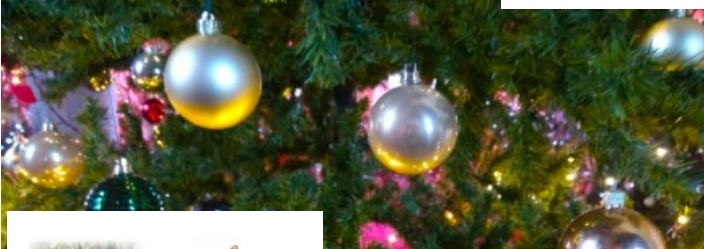


FOOD BANK
DONATE HERE

GIVE WHAT YOU CAN FOR FAMILIES IN TIMES OF NEED

More than 235 people were given emergency food in the local area last year. More people turn to food banks to support their families.

Please donate anything you can today. Food Bank box is at the back of St Nicholas Church, Worth or St George's Church, Langton. Thank you.



The Dubber
April 2023

Easter Service Times

SUNDAY 2 APRIL EASTER SUNDAY	Worship
8am Holy Communion ACP	Kingston
10am Holy Communion	Worship
11am Holy Communion	Langton
12pm Holy Communion	Worship
1pm Holy Communion	Langton
FRIDAY 7 APRIL GOOD FRIDAY	Langton
7pm Holy Communion	Langton
SUNDAY 9 APRIL EASTER DAY	St Andrew's
8am Holy Communion	Langton



The Dubber
December 2023

St. George's CE Primary School, Langton Matravers



Live Learning; Love Learning
 enabling our community to live life in all its fullness
 John 10:10-16

St. George's CE Primary School is one of the family of Church of England schools in the Diocese of Salisbury.

In addition to offering an excellent foundation for education, our school is distinguished by its commitment to Christian education, worship and values, including the teaching of respect for people of other beliefs.

To achieve 'Life in all its fullness', our aims every day are to:

- Provide a **supportive, safe** and **stimulating environment** within a **caring Christian community**.
- Promote a **love of learning** by offering rich opportunities connected to the natural environment, encouraging learning through **real, living experiences**.
- Enable all pupils to **achieve their potential, regardless of background**.
- Inspire pupils to develop **positive relationships** and **celebrate the diversity** within our world.
- Equip pupils with the life skills required to become **independent, responsible, respectful** and **caring citizens**.



Church Links

We have close links with St. George's Church in Langton Matravers and we visit it regularly. We hold services each term where parents/carers and the local community are welcomed to join us in celebrating many Christian festivals, such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We also have local clergy visit the school each week to hold themed worship groups for the whole school. Every half-term, the Open-the-Book team comes in to perform a drama based on a passage from the Bible, and some of our pupils are invited to join them in acting out the story.

Partnerships

We welcome many volunteers from the local community; parents/carers and grandparents who assist the school. They help in many ways, for example listening to readers, running clubs, and serving in the PTA. The school communicates with parents and carers through newsletters, our website, social media, e-mails, invitations to workshops, Open Days, class assemblies, and consultation evenings.



More information

Our website at www.stgeorgeslangton.dorset.sch.uk gives further information about the school, including newsletters, policies, and termly class blogs. We also have active Facebook and Instagram pages which regularly share photos of what the children are learning and which activities they have taken part in:

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

https://www.instagram.com/st_georges_primary_langton/

Prayer

Thank you for reading this Profile.

We would be thankful if you would join with us in this prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Be with all those who use this profile, and help them as they reflect on whether this is the right place for them to serve you.

Be with our Benefice throughout this period of vacancy, and may your Holy Spirit guide all those involved in the selection process as we endeavour to discern whom you are calling to serve alongside us in this place.

Amen.

POSTCARDS FROM PURBECK



Dearest family,

We are having a wonderful time here in the Isle of Purbeck. The Jurassic Coast was magnificent as were the fossils at Kimmeridge. We visited Corfe Castle and St Edward's Church was such a peaceful place. The beach at Swanage was very busy, but the swimming most pleasant. We walked out to Old Harry Rocks but drove up to Durlston Castle and The Great Globe.

Purbeck is a truly delightful place to visit and we will be back.

Sending all our love

Aunt Agatha & Uncle Cedric



Fred & Bertha Smith

72 Broad Road

OXFORD

OX1 3YX

