



Parish profile and job description for 'PEW Group'* Vicar (0.5FT)

*St Chad Prees, St Mary the Virgin Edstaston, St Mary Whixall

"To worship together, work together and support one another to extend our witness, live our faith and grow our congregations"



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An invitation from the Bishop of Lichfield

Cradled at the intersection of the Midlands and the North, and the interface between England and Wales, the Diocese of Lichfield is the ancient centre of Christianity in what was the Kingdom of Mercia.

St Chad, Lichfield's first Bishop, journeyed around Mercia with heavenly hope and the good news of Christ's resurrection. He believed that there was 'a new opening for the gospel' in Mercia. Many people became followers of Jesus.



Accounts of the apostles' journeys, as they travelled in the power of the Spirit, with little other than the stories of Christ's life, crucifixion and resurrection, were Chad's only companions. His plan to walk Mercia was as daring in its simplicity and boldness as God trusting the gospel first to the shepherds and then to just twelve apostles.

Chad set out believing that he would bear fruit, and that the kingdom of God would grow. Bede describes Chad as 'humble, devout, zealous and apostolic'.

Today, in our much more complex world, I recognise a similar opening for the Gospel in these parts and I invite you to join with me in seizing this opportunity to follow Christ in the humble, devout, zealous and apostolic footsteps of St Chad.

Over the centuries, we have become immersed in Chad's legacy - as we are immersed in Christ at baptism. Chad's church of ordinary Mercian people became a growing community of Christian faith through the example of Chad's pilgrim life and ministry pointing to Jesus. This must have encouraged him in his arduous and sacrificial journey for the sake of the gospel. To truly follow Christ in Chad's footsteps today, we must be committed to this life and ministry. **This is zealous.**

Chad's legacy of a vibrant community of faith leads us today to charge our clergy with nurturing, outside weekly worship, confident knowledge of the faith handed down to us. Such faith is characterised by a readiness in each member of our worshipping communities to speak about what Jesus Christ means in their lives and how they are being shaped by him. Doing this, we will recognise and rejoice in the gifts of all those, lay and ordained, who contribute to the life and ministry of our churches. **This is apostolic.**

Our clergy should take responsibility for their own flourishing and effectiveness, supported by the wellbeing and learning programmes in development and through prioritising participation in peer support and review. Chad would have been spurred on seeing God's unfolding plan in Mercia, just as the flourishing of the gifts of all God's people can contribute to our clergy's human flourishing and effectiveness as ministers. **This is humble.**

Together, as the Body of Christ in this place, reflecting Chad's legacy in giving priority to purposeful evangelism, creative engagement with local communities, and to becoming more diverse and growing younger, our trajectory is given full expression in our diocesan strategy, 'Seeking the Kingdom'. It is a manifesto for what I invite us by God's grace to achieve as a diocese.

If we are to truly follow in Chad's footsteps together, we will go forward with his devotion to prayer. So doing, we will go believing that God will be faithful and will build his kingdom. **This is devout.**

Our journey together begins with our vision prayer:

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find you, O God already at work in your world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

+Michael



Welcome from the Bishop of Shrewsbury and the Archdeacon of Salop



We're delighted that you're looking at this post, as Vicar of Prees, Edstaston and Whixall. We pray that God will give you a clear sense of whether he might be calling you to serve in this role. Should you join us here, we look forward to working with you in God's service!

In Lichfield diocese, much of our shared life, leadership and mutual support is lived out through episcopal areas, so we would expect to get to know you and to encourage you in your ministry and mission here. We have much to do in God's service, and a wonderful area in which to serve him together.

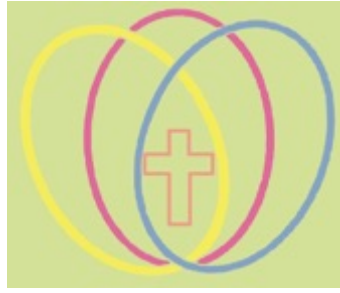
The Shrewsbury Episcopal Area (which covers the same area as the Archdeaconry of Salop) covers a large area and many communities across North Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Reaching from the Cheshire border in the north to the edges of the Shropshire Hills (and the Diocese of Hereford) in the south, and from the outskirts of Wolverhampton in the east to across the Welsh border in the west, it includes churches of all sizes, traditions and history. Mostly rural, we also serve the ancient town of Shrewsbury, fast-growing Telford, and a number of substantial market towns, *Seeking the Kingdom* of the one God whose love is constant in all places.

It's telling that for some time the parishes of Prees, Edstaston and Whixall have been known more widely by their unofficial title of the 'PEW Group.' The churches are distinct, each very aware of their contexts, traditions and priorities in mission; but they have an established life together as a group, sharing in worship and work together. They have previous and very positive experience of working with 0.5FTE incumbents, and will be committed to helping you to lead and serve well, while respecting the boundaries of this part time role. With a heart for mission and a love for rural communities, you will find here willing congregations who are keen to develop their discipleship and their mission.

We hope that this profile gives you enough insight into the PEW group and the role of Vicar there to discern with God whether or not to apply. If you'd like to know more before deciding, please contact Archdeacon Nick on 07506 748 702 or at archdeacon.salop@lichfield.anglican.org.

Thank you.

+Sarah and Archdeacon Nick



Introduction

This is a lovely post, working in three beautiful and historic rural churches, St Chad Prees, St Mary the Virgin Edstaston and St Mary Whixall. The 'PEW group' has been described as 'one church with three buildings': our congregations and PCCs share a common faith and vision, and genuinely care for one another, work together and support each other in many ways. Our Patron is the Rector of Wem.

The previous post combined the unique positions of Vicar of our Benefice and Chaplaincy to the two local Secondary Schools (fixed term); following the post holder's leaving to take up to a new full-time post as a Priest, closer to family, the post has been reorganised to continue as a 0.5 Vicar post, but without the chaplaincy responsibilities.

We have a **great lay team** (which includes two lay funeral ministers) and we are looking for that **special person to join us, walk with us, lead us and inspire us**: a vicar who has a heart for rural ministry and pastoral care and with a real desire to be part of our community; a skilled communicator, with empathy for all those from our diverse village communities. Our vicar should be friendly, approachable and can meet people where they are.

God is good and we are confident that our future is in his hands.

Our Benefice is distinctly rural, in the heart of North Shropshire. A 'triangle' of about 3.5 miles separates each of our parishes. Travel time is usually about 10 minutes between churches (unless you get stuck at Prees level crossing!). A car is essential for movement between the three parishes. The Vicarage is in Prees, next to the church and the school, and is about 7.5 miles from the towns of Wem and Whitchurch.

As you read our Parish Profile, we hope you will gain a sense of our current life and our hopes for the future, as well as a sense of our history. We are seeking a new vicar who will help us to continue embracing change and be forward-looking, as well as sharing the core values summed up in our mission statement:

"To worship together, work together and support one another to extend our witness, live our faith and grow our congregations".

In practice this means we try to:

- show God's love in our communities
- be mindful of the needs of one another
- uphold the sacramental basis of our faith, yet also offering wider and different opportunities for praise and worship
- be aware of the presence of God in all ways and places
- live out Christian ministry in daily life
- encourage life-long learning about Christian faith
- maintain our historic buildings as a visible sign of God's presence among us; as a space of prayer and sanctuary in a busy world; yet developing the use of the buildings as places of welcome, community and hospitality

Our new Vicar

The Challenges

Each of our three churches wants to grow and to continue to be a clear voice and active presence in our communities. If you join us we hope you would be at the heart of this ambition – but to do that you will need to understand the unique nature of our area and the distinct differences between our villages. Two of our three churches are in rural, non-nucleated villages. Communication isn't easy. The third village has a traditional village centre but is a deprived area, as we outline below.

In setting out the following, we recognise that this is a 0.5 post, but we would need you to be a personal presence in the church, in the schools and in the local community. **We promise to continue to respect and ring-fence the part-time nature of this post, to ensure a positive work/life balance**

The person appointed should:

1 Mission and Outreach

- minister to those who look to the church at significant times of their lives, working with our experienced teams of lay members across the Benefice
- encourage members of the church to show God's love in action in their daily lives and support and nurture those who are new to faith
- work with Prees C of E and Whixall C of E Primary schools to foster life-long faith
- help to maintain positive links within the wider parish groups
-

2 Leadership and working collaboratively

- be an enabler - leading, inspiring and empowering us in our Mission
- listen carefully and work with the many gifts and talents of others
- recognise our three churches' priorities given in response to the Bishop's Vision and Strategy Framework Plan¹
- work collaboratively with our schools and communicate effectively with young people and their families

¹ Following the Shaping for Mission Initiative, the Bishop introduced Vision and Strategy Framework Plan in July 2024. As individual PCCs these were discussed at length with the following priorities for each church. The full response may be found as an appendix. We feel a vicar would be an important member of our Team to review and help develop strategies to continue to progress with our priorities.

Prees: St Chad's

3 current priorities

- Community engagement plans: leading to new disciples
- Connection with 'every' primary school
- Age profiles reflect the community age profiles

Edstaston: St Mary the Virgin

3 current Priorities

- Community engagement plans
- 34,000 new disciples
- Age profiles reflect community age profiles

Whixall: St Mary's

3 current Priorities

- An action plan for enhancing our connection with the local community
- Try to increase our worshipping community
- Strengthen our connection with Whixall School

3 Liturgy, worship and preaching

- lead worship that gives glory to God, prayerfully and imaginatively, maximizing a range of resources, including music, teaching and preaching
- communicate, interpret and proclaim the gospel for different occasions, making it accessible to a range of audiences
- develop creative links between people in our communities, participating through music or drama, for example; some supportive expertise is already in place within the parishes

4 Pastoral care

- provide appropriate pastoral care, using those in the church team to help where needed
- facilitate baptism and marriage preparation and funeral and bereavement work, using the lay team as appropriate
- work with church members, using the skills and qualities that the church communities have developed during vacancy

5. Management and parish organisation

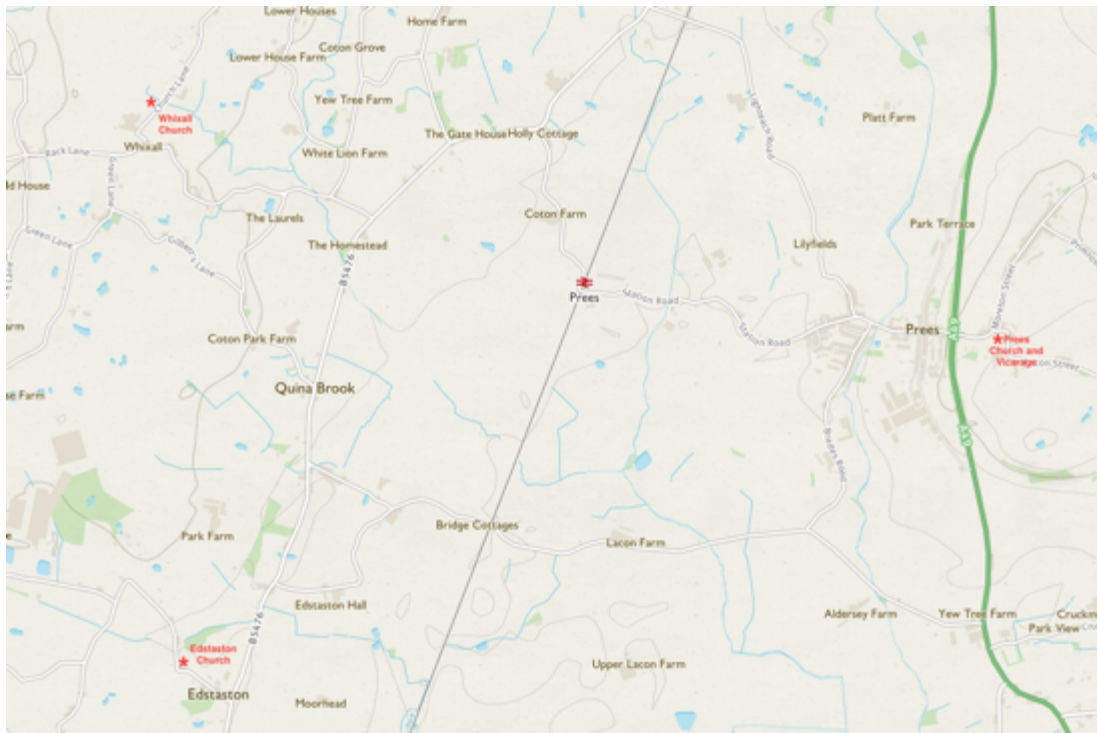
- be able to lead and manage a Benefice that is not frightened of change
- be confident in addressing our churches' finances and capable of thinking strategically about long-term financial situations alongside competent church treasurers
- work with lay ministers, churchwardens and PCCs to ensure that structures and resources for parish organisation are appropriate, identifying respective responsibilities and accountabilities
- ensure that structures, processes and policies in relation to services, weddings, baptisms and funerals, health and safety, finances, fabric, team management, safeguarding etc. meet diocesan and legal requirements
- have an appropriate level of computer literacy, including use of social media and use of Life Events Diary

6. Personal qualities

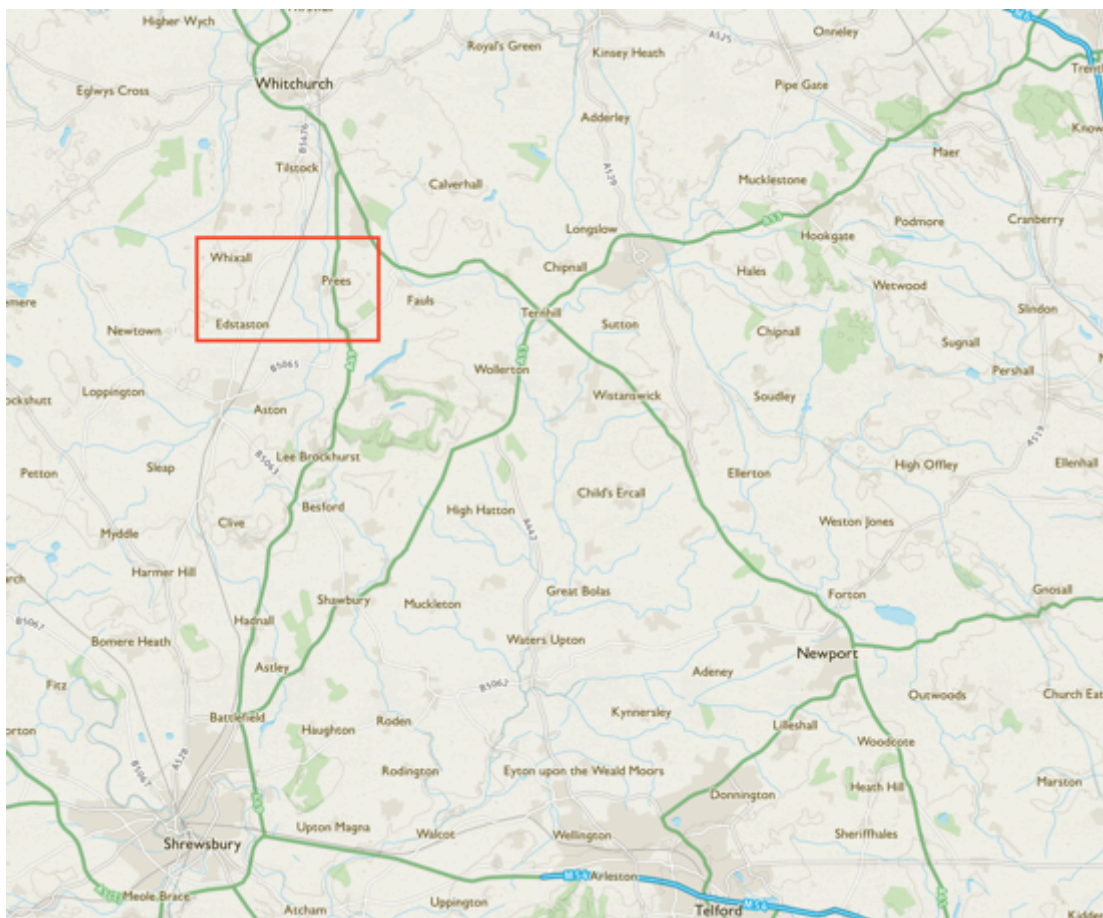
- follow an appropriate pattern of work that enables a full spiritual and personal life, whilst ensuring adequate quality time for family life, recreation, renewal and well-being
- manage time effectively through personal administration, planning and organisation, interpersonal skills, working with others, and delegating, when appropriate
- be committed to their own continuing personal and professional development and skills
- maintain a prayerful spiritual life with appropriate support networks
- have a current driving licence and access to a car

The Three Parishes

The parishes that make up the PEW group lie in a beautiful part of Shropshire, to the north of Shrewsbury.



The churches of the PEW group



Map data © Google / ordnance survey

Prees, Edstaston and Whixall: Working together as a Benefice

The three churches of St Chad's Prees, St Mary the Virgin Edstaston and St Mary's Whixall made the joint decision to worship collectively.

Our established pattern of joint worship is:

- 1st Sunday 11am Holy Communion at Prees
- 2nd Sunday 11am Holy Communion at Edstaston
- 2nd Wednesday 10.45 Morning Worship at Whixall (Lay led)
- 3rd Sunday 11am Lay led Family Worship at Prees (Lay led)
- 4th Sunday 11am Holy Communion at Whixall
- 4th Wednesday 10.45 Holy Communion at Whixall
- 5th Sunday 9.30 BCP at Prees; 6.30 Songs of Praise alternating between Edstaston and Whixall



Mothering Sunday, Easter, Remembrance, All Souls, and Carol services are held in each of the three churches. Prees holds a very successful Crib service for the Benefice, which is now seeing second generation children coming along with their parents. Whixall has an annual Pet Service for the Benefice and a Christingle service (which it holds jointly with the School). We hold regular Services at Elmhurst Care Home in Prees. The Benefice has an annual Blue Christmas service for the bereaved and those who find the Season difficult, and this rotates between the parishes.

Prees and Whixall Schools hold services in our churches at Easter, Christmas and for Harvest and Leavers.



Whilst individual services allow for distinctiveness, the joint and combined services that rotate between the parishes demonstrate the real warmth of fellowship between us all, with hospitality offered at the end of each Sunday and Wednesday service. (This picture of one Sunday's baking triumph shows the work of Edstaston organist, Alan!)



The closeness of our relationship is seen in our support of each other's social and fundraising events.



Personnel

You would be joining a friendly, supportive and effective Benefice lay team: PEW has one licensed lay reader, a licensed lay funeral minister, and a number of volunteers who can lead worship, read or lead prayers. Prees currently has two churchwardens, Edstaston has one and Whixall has two. There is a part-time administrator who manages paperwork, Life Diary, ACNY, invoicing for funerals and weddings, social media, creating posters etc. We have Wedding and Baptism liaison coordinators who work closely with the couples/families and the church team. We know that our team will be on hand to help our new vicar manage their part time post. There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care, with members of the churches visiting the sick and ensuring that anyone needing a clergy visit receives one. There are two organists (one at Edstaston and one covering Prees and Whixall).

PCC

Each church has its own PCC but we also have some joint PCC meetings, to share expertise, make joint decisions, and offer mutual support as needed. Our Benefice also has a joint Bank Account for clergy and admin expenses, etc. Each PCC contributes to this account. We also have a Collectin for digital giving, which generally 'lives' in Prees but which rotates around our churches for services and Occasional Offices, supplementing traditional plate donations. The Common Fund of each church in the Benefice is always paid in full.

Communications

We use a wide range of methods to communicate. PEW has 'X', Instagram and Facebook accounts, and the three churches make a good use of 'A Church Near You'. We also produce a monthly joint 'PEW' sheet, with services, lectionary readings and events.

St Chad's produces a monthly Community magazine, 'Venture', which serves the whole of Prees. It is a mixture of church news, services and events, school news, community events, letters, articles, various societies' information, as well as adverts for local businesses. It has a circulation of approximately 400.



Whixall uses Facebook, both through its own church Facebook page and the village's lively Community Facebook. Edstaston also uses Facebook.



Study groups

A regular Bible study group is led by a member of Prees' congregation in their home and is attended by members from across the wider PEW group. Lent and Advent book reading groups are also held, rotating around people's homes.

Ecumenical relations

There are good connections across the parishes with other Christian denominations. St Chad's, Prees, has links with the Methodist Church in the village and at Prees Green, and the Baptist Church. Members from these churches and chapels have been encouraged to come together for the RBL Remembrance Sunday Service. St Mary's, Whixall shares the Remembrance Sunday Service with the local Methodist Chapel, rotating annually between 'chapel' and 'church'.



St Chad's, Prees



The church of St Chad is Grade 2* Listed. It sits high up in the village, nestled together with the churchyard, vicarage and school, next to the War Memorial and garden. It's a beautiful spot. St Chad's is largely 14th-century but is built on a Saxon site (with what is rumoured to be a Roman road running alongside). St Chad's has an 18th-century tower with a peel of regularly-rung bells; and has a wonderful and exceptional window of glass by John Thornton (of Great East Window, York Minster, fame), which was brought to Prees from 'Battlefield' church (on the site of the Battle of Shrewsbury, 1403). The fund-raising team are currently energetically raising the money for its conservation and are being supported generously by people across the area, not just regular churchgoers. To date over £50k has been raised.

The 2022 Quinquennial inspection noted that the church is in good repair. Recently we have installed new electrical sockets, heater, wifi and a large printer photocopier in the vestry, creating a comfortable work space. There is a small kitchen area and an indoor toilet.

The parish of St Chad's Church also covers the villages of Higher Heath and Prees Green, as well as some surrounding farms and cottages. Sunday congregations average 35, with far more for special services and festivals. The Family Worship service has active participation by the younger members of the congregation; it's very well supported by all ages, and is still growing! Currently there are also 56 on the electoral roll; however, there are several areas of new developments within the parish and the local population of 3061 is growing, so it would be good for this to be reflected in our roll in the future.

St Chad's is a popular choice for weddings and there is a stream of baptisms through the year. Although we are in the process of closing the churchyard in liaison with the Parish Council, as the churchyard is now full, we are opening a new ashes burial spot by the south door. After closure, the churchyard will then become the responsibility of the Parish Council.



Social activities are organised throughout the year, not just to raise money but to allow the community to meet together and usually eat together! St Chad's Ladies group meets informally for friendship and outings. The PCC has a 100 Club to raise money for the upkeep of the churchyard, which is appreciated as an asset in the whole community. During lockdown, St Chad's organised Christmas hampers for the families of children at the school who were on free school meals.

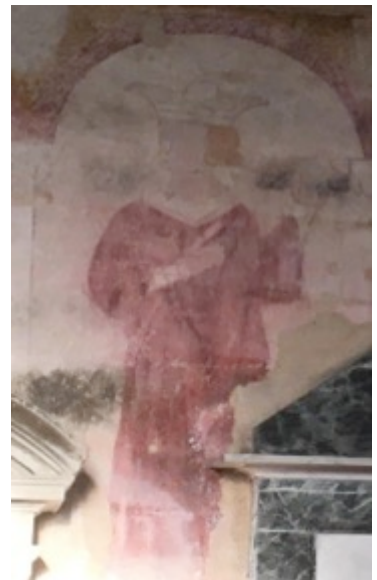


St Mary the Virgin, Edstaston

St Mary the Virgin church is set in the Parish of Edstaston and Coton. The church is Grade 1 Listed. It dates back to 1150 and is one of the most complete Romanesque buildings in Shropshire with stunning doorways and original wooden doors. The building also has medieval wall paintings, which are said to be 'quite astonishing in their extent and importance', and the PCC has taken the first steps in conserving these. The building has received some restoration through the centuries and is in good repair (Quinquennial, 2023). The churchyard is award winning and there is a new Church burial ground donated for community use. There are toilet facilities available at the church.



Edstaston has a small but dedicated congregation. They are joined at their Sunday services by members of the other two PEW churches, and members of the wider village community attend special and festival services. Congregation members will happily read the Bible and help lead lay-led services, such as Remembrance, Blue Christmas, All Souls and Songs of Praise. There is a well-maintained two-manual organ, built by JJ Binns, played by a regular organist. There are 31 on the Electoral Roll.



The PCC works extremely hard to fundraise in a variety of creative ways and parishioners work together to maintain the building and grounds. The church has a very close relationship with the village hall, often sharing very successful and lively fundraising events, such as their Beer Festival, concerts, and comedy nights; these events have enabled the hall committee to plan substantial re-development. The church has a 100 Club, which raises funds for the church; and this is drawn at the end of the church service each month.



The Parish of Edstaston and Coton is long and narrow, extending north from the outskirts of Wem, to the southern edge of Tilstock. There are around 645 inhabitants in this rural area, one pub, and the village hall. The village of Edstaston is non-nucleated but the village hall is the centre of much of village cultural life. There are many small businesses but primarily the area is agricultural. Young people in the parish usually attend Whixall CE Primary School and Thomas Adams Secondary.

St Mary's, Whixall

St Mary's church was built in 1867 and is Grade 2 Listed. The style is described as 'late Early English' and is said to be by the famous Victorian architect, G.E. Street, who designed the Royal Courts of Justice. It may be plain on the outside but it's beautiful on the inside!

The building is in good repair: the Quinquennial (2023) found just a couple of very minor actions to be undertaken which are in hand, with a Diocesan grant. Whixall has a positive and often hands-on approach to maintaining the building and developing the church's facilities (as seen, for example, in the building of our large car park, the addition of toilet facilities and the cleaning out of the bell tower). There are 26 on the Electoral Roll.



The congregation is sometimes small but always enthusiastic. Sunday services always include members of all three churches, for a time of true fellowship, and Whixall also has a much-valued, mid-week Holy Communion service on the fourth Wednesday of the month as well as a lay-led service every second Wednesday. Numbers swell for 'festival' services: Rogation and Harvest are both particularly meaningful in a rural parish and the Carol Service sometimes features a folk band, rather than the usual organ. Whixall church has very close ties with the local primary school. During lockdown St Mary's was at the centre of creating Christmas hampers for the families of children at the school who were on free school meals. The village was incredibly generous in their donations, showing the warmth of the people of Whixall.



The church holds a number of coffee mornings throughout the year. While these are necessary to help with funds, they are also vital in forging and maintaining links with the local community. All-comers are welcome and do come! The highpoint of this sort of link is Whixall's famous Harvest Supper and produce auction.

St Mary's has a '100 club', which raises funds for the church at the same time as facilitating close connections with people around the parish who, while they may not regularly attend church, have a stronger sense of being part of our church community and supporting its work. One member of the PCC – and her mum – organises an extraordinary hamper raffle every Christmas with dozens of hamper prizes, many donated by villagers, and this raises a substantial sum each year.



The parish of Whixall, covers a large rural area, c2.5 miles wide by c4 miles long and shares a border with Wales. As a rural parish, businesses tend to focus on farming or other agricultural work but there are a number of individual businesses based on creative or IT work and some leisure-based businesses, such as caravan sites. It is a dispersed settlement with several smaller hamlets served by over 76 miles of winding country lanes. It does not have a centre as such but the Bowling Club and Social Centre are both hives of social activity. Whixall is very popular with families and walkers, having an extraordinary Site of Special Scientific Interest, Whixall Moss, a branch of the Llangollen Canal running through the village, and the café at Whixall Marina - a lovely place for a cuppa and to watch the boats and the resident swan, Sid, and his family!



Current heritage projects in the Benefice

St Chad's, Prees, has nearly completed fundraising for the restoration of its 15th-century 'Battlefield' window; the conservation process is due to start in October 2025.

St Mary the Virgin, Edstaston, has commissioned the condition report for its medieval wall paintings and has received a Church Care grant covering most of the cost of the report before applying for the Faculty needed for the work.

Statistical profiles of the Parishes*

*Figures taken from the 2021 Census

Prees Parish	3061 residents	1075 households	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60.4% Identifying as Christian• 2.1% population from EU• 1.4% population from elsewhere• 1.5% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups• A local Traveller population which does not appear in the census• Prees is in the 4th decile of Deprivation
Edstaston	645 residents	247 households	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 59% identifying as Christian• 98.5% of the population is white• Edstaston is in the 4th decile of Deprivation
Whixall	891 residents	345 households	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 62.2% identifying as Christian• 1.7% Population from EU• 98.5% of the population is white• Whixall is in the 4th decile of Deprivation

The above census statistics demonstrate that all three parishes communities with their own distinctive demographic. What they all have in common is beautiful rural settings masking a level of deprivation. However the majority of the populations in each of our parishes identify as Christian.

The Statistics for Mission showed that the demographic of our usual congregations is mature! However we have a core of younger families who consider themselves as belonging. This is certainly seen in the the Family Worships which have continued to grow during vacancy. There is real opportunity for further growth.

Primary Schools

Our two primary schools, **Prees CE Primary School** and **Whixall CE Primary School**, together form the **Fields Academy Trust** (along with the school at Clive). They share a Mission Statement that makes clear their Christian vision: *'Our distinctive Christian ethos facilitates the well being and best quality education for each child. Children achieve the fullness of life through discovering and developing their talents.'* Both schools have their own school vision, and Christian Values are at the heart of their ethos.



The churches have always celebrated their links with the schools, both at the school and in the church. Schools have active Foundation Governors and Foundation Trustees; the children come to church for two or three key services each year; and the vicar's personal presence has been a vital element in the deepening relationship between church and school. It is expected that this will develop further with any future appointment and that the new vicar will lead worship in both schools. Currently worship is led in both schools by the Reader, Mrs Hodges, assisted by a Foundation Governor, and both are very warmly welcomed by the children and staff. As



churches, we have focused on supporting 'church' in school through Journey Day activities and after school clubs, as well as welcoming the school to hold special seasonal celebrations, such as Harvest, in our buildings. Both churches ensure a warm welcome awaits not just the pupils, but their families too, in these special services. Both schools promote these special services in their newsletters.

Prees CE Primary School



Prees School has 186 pupils, including nursery, with children from ages 2 to 11. The school has a strong Christian ethos, and Christian Values underpin the promotion of positive achievement. Their Vision makes it clear that: *'We are a caring, supportive village school, underpinned by Christian values. We celebrate the uniqueness of every child and encourage them to shine in a nurturing, creative environment. Each and every child receives a high standard of education that is broad, exciting and challenging. We foster within our children a love of learning and a confidence in their own abilities in order for them to continue their journey as independent learners.'*

In their last SIAMS (28th April 2023), the overall grade was 'Good' and the impact of Collective Worship was 'Good'. Key findings noted: *'Collective worship is a strong focus of the school and church partnership'* and *'The close partnership with St Chad's Church is a key strength of the school. Church members are involved in the daily life of the school as well as at local and trustee board levels. The school has its own entrance to the church, which has also opened up the church to the community. Pupils, families and staff talk about the parish church being their church, as an extension of the school community.'*

As OFSTED noted in November 2019, *'The Christian ethos and school values of trust, honesty, respect, generosity, friendship and kindness help pupils understand how to treat others.'* The recent ungraded Ofsted (2025) additionally commented: the school 'accurately describe themselves as a "happy school

where everyone matters"... Pupils... care about their peers [and] know that their thoughts and ideas matter.'

The school '*actively encourages hard work, high expectations, and happiness through a broad and balanced curriculum*' and is constantly looking for ways to enhance pupils' school lives. It recently installed a fantastic new running track and gained a platinum award for sport, for example. More information can be found on the schools' website: <https://www.prees.shropshire.sch.uk>



Whixall CE Primary School



Whixall School has 117 pupils aged 2-11 and has a pre-school nursery. It is clear on its position as a CoFE School. The school has gained the RE Quality Mark and, as the school's Vision makes clear, '*Positive achievement for all pupils is promoted through the Christian values of respect, caring, forgiveness, tolerance, trust, perseverance and supportiveness, enabling each child to develop a healthy self esteem, and attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility. As a school, everyone works towards positive and realistic goals. High priority is given to strong links between the school, home, church and community.*'

The school was recently rated 'Good' by Ofsted (February 2025). They noted that one parent's comment was typical of many when they said, '*an ethos of kindness, inclusion and community shines out*'. Pupils noted that the school's values '*help us and others to get on well*'. Clearly the children have taken real ownership of the school's Christian values.



In their last SIAMS (6th July 2023), the school's overall grade was 'Good', and the impact of school Collective Worship was 'Excellent.' One of the key findings was: '*Collective worship is inspirational and at the heart of daily life. Leaders, along with a church representative and pupils are heavily involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation. This allows spiritual growth and gives regular encounters with the teachings of Jesus. Pupils confidently lead prayer.*' The inspection noted that '*Key Christian festivals are celebrated in the church, this unites the school and local community.*'

North Shropshire Christmas card competition winner revealed



By Alex Whilding
Reporter
@alexwhilding

Share 2 Comment

North Shropshire's Christmas card competition winner has been revealed by MP Helen Morgan.

Leo, aged 9, from Whixall CE Primary School, designed the winning card.

The card which has been shown to Mr Speaker will be sent to people all over North Shropshire this Christmas.

The school provides '*a rich and creative educational experience to ensure that all the children in our care reach the very best of their potential in all aspects of their social, emotional and academic learning.*' It has recently been awarded the Arts Mark Silver award.

For more information, visit: <https://www.whixall.shropshire.sch.uk>

Local Secondary Schools

Sir John Talbots School, Whitchurch

Sir John Talbot's School is an open access comprehensive school catering for children aged between 11 and 18; it is situated in the rural market town of Whitchurch and is part of the Marches Academy Trust. It was rated Good with some outstanding features in its last Ofsted. <http://www.sirjohntalbots.co.uk>

The Thomas Adams School, Wem

The Thomas Adams School has a school, sixth form and a boarding school. It has 1200 students and 90 staff. Approximately 60% of the school's students come to school on buses from the extensive surrounding rural area. <https://www.thomasadams.net>

Clergy Accommodation

The vicarage

The vicarage is situated next to both St Chad's Church and Prees CE Primary School. It was built in the 1960s and has been well maintained by the Diocese. It has four bedrooms, two reception rooms, and a separate study/office off the entrance, as well as a kitchen with utility, and a downstairs toilet. There is oil central heating and an open fire in the lounge. It has a reasonably modern kitchen, bathroom, double glazed windows and new external doors. There is a large single garage. The vicarage is set in a large and established garden, largely laid to lawns, trees and shrubs and with a new patio; it is south-facing. The three parishes have money in the Diocese Decorating Fund, and the Vicarage is in good decorative order.



Prees as a place to live

The village has good facilities within walking distance:

- a primary School with nursery; with a weekly toddler Stay, Play and Chat
- two general stores, including a Post Office
- The Grocott Medical Centre
- Prees Cricket and Recreation Club (an exceptional facility for all ages) <https://www.preesrecclub.co.uk>
- a repair and MOT Garage
- a hairdressers
- Fire Station
- Prees Village Hall
- Baptist and Methodist Churches
- an electrical shop
- a café
- a garden centre
- a free car park in the village centre

There is a railway station about a mile out of the village, which connects us to Crewe and Shrewsbury. From there fast trains travel to Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and London (Prees to

London takes only two and a half hours via Crewe). There are regular buses to Whitchurch and Shrewsbury via Wem. Morning and evening bus links allow post-16 students to get to various Colleges. School buses take secondary students to Whitchurch and Wem.

There's a wide range of opportunities to be a part of local groups, clubs and 'associations' in Prees, including very active young people's associations. A copy of 'Venture' magazine (which lists all these available opportunities) will be made available at interview or on request.

Moving into the future: our hopes

Does this sound like an exciting challenge for you? We want our churches to develop and grow, looking for creative ways to bring new people to faith and to encourage our young people to move to Confirmation study. This is particularly challenging in rural, dispersed parishes. Each of our churches recognises the need to attract new members but we face challenges: we need to offer worship that meets the needs of current worshippers with contemporary services that will attract new members. There are many people on the edges - people who support events and attend special services - but this needs to be built upon. Numbers attending the Family Service at Prees are increasing monthly, demonstrating that such growth is entirely feasible.

All three churches feel there is real potential for developing links to families throughout our villages, making the most of our association with our schools; the Executive Head clearly values very highly the connection with the churches and wishes to develop it.

Our main objective is to grow, both as individual parish churches but also as PEW Group. We have ideas to help people to see that church is not just on Sundays. Our new vicar is central to this ambition - but they will have willing and able support: our churches have continued to thrive during this vacancy because we have grown together and have drawn on the skills and experience of one another, regardless of parish. **We recognise that this is a 0.5 FT post and that a new vicar will benefit from the churches taking responsibility for other areas of ministry where possible and, as our Reader, administrator, and funeral, wedding and baptism teams currently work effectively across all three churches, we would hope this can continue to be useful support for our new priest.**

We pray for support and guidance as we move forward:

God our Father, you welcome each of us in Jesus and call us to be His Body in our Benefice. Guide us as we work together in this time of Vacancy.

Send us your Holy Spirit, to continue to strengthen us with shared vision, energy and faithfulness, that we may be true to our calling to spread your love through our communities.

We give you thanks for all that has been and all that will be.

Guide to us the person who is right for us and our communities: a shepherd for your people, ready to serve in faith.

As we follow in the footsteps of St Chad, may we look to an exciting future of love and fellowship. Amen

Role Description and Person Specification – Vicar of Prees, Edstaston and Whixall

Initial Role Description

This will be reviewed with the Archdeacon of Salop after six months in post.

This is established as a 0.5 stipendiary incumbent's post.

General

- To exercise faithfully and diligently the ministry of a parish priest as canonically defined and as appropriate in the benefice, deanery and diocese
- To lead, pastorally and collaboratively, the mission and ministry of the parishes and fresh expressions of the benefice, in living out our vision of '[Seeking the Kingdom](#)'
- To exemplify and promote good safeguarding policy and practice, in line with '[Promoting a Safer Church](#)' as [implemented in Lichfield diocese](#).

Specific

Drawn from the Parish Profile, particularly the section 'Our new Vicar' on pp.6-7

- Recognise, review and lead work towards the distinct mission priorities identified by the three churches (footnoted on p6), helping churches to work together when that is helpful and to nurture their own individual identities;
- Lead ministry to those who seek pastoral offices and care, developing the role of lay teams in supporting this ministry and the preparation and follow-up around it;
- Discern and enable exercise of the gifts of church members; leading, inspiring and empowering them in mission, in leading worship and in pastoral care;
- Work creatively with our two CofE Primary schools to foster life-long faith;
- Communicate, interpret and proclaim the gospel accessibly for different occasions and audiences;
- Work with lay colleagues to ensure strategic and day-to-day clarity and rigour in finance, administration and oversight;

Person Specification

We are looking for a person who is:

- In priest's orders in the Church of England or in a church with which the Church of England is in communion, and has completed successfully IME4-7 or the local equivalent; and who has at least three years' experience in the Church of England or other Anglican church in the British Isles;
- Committed to growing in their own spiritual life, with appropriate support networks; and to their own continuing personal and ministerial development;
- Experienced and skilled in leading and managing change in church life;
- Comfortable engaging with and motivating small rural communities, with a ministry of presence as well as of proclamation;
- Skilled and wise in prioritisation and use of time, including the balance of 'hands-on' personal presence and ministry with investment of time in developing the ministry of others; willing and confident sensitively to maintain appropriate boundaries of time and commitment;
- Familiar with and committed to the principles and practice of safeguarding in parish leadership;
- A minister with strong administrative and IT skills, including use of social media and the Life Events Diary;
- Comfortable dealing with parish finances, and developing our sustainability;
- In possession of a full driving licence and with use of a vehicle for work purposes.