



Assistant Priest in the Parish of Tamworth

Information Pack 2025





Parish of Tamworth
Assistant Priest

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**THE BISHOP
OF LICHFIELD**

A word of welcome to the Diocese 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.

We are rightfully grateful for the inheritance we have from our first bishop St Chad that leads us to focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism as we live and serve among the communities of Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country.

By answering God's call to minister in Lichfield Diocese you will benefit from being part of a wide family, mixing with people serving in a variety of contexts – from the grittiest inner-city neighbourhoods of Stoke and the Black Country, to the leafiest rural parishes of Staffordshire and Shropshire, to the sparsest upland communities of the Staffordshire Moorlands and Welsh Borders.

And we embrace the widest spectrum of church traditions – evangelical and catholic, liberal and conservative, choral and charismatic – as we journey together in mission. As a colleague recently put it, it is our goal to be a 'spacious and gracious diocese'.

It is my determination and that of my episcopal colleagues that your calling to minister with us in Lichfield Diocese will be a time of encouragement, fulfilment, challenge and joy. You will not be alone in your ministry; as part of the wider team our colleagues among the diocesan staff keenly bring their various specialisms both spiritual and practical to offer resource and support as you serve our parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies.

+ Michael Ipgrave



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Welcome from the Rural Dean

Rev. Debra Dyson, Vicar of Wigginton

The Parish of Tamworth, in particular the Parish Church of St Editha's is at the heart of the town and of the deanery of Tamworth both physically in its position and practically in being the largest church building in the deanery.

St Editha's draws in people daily as the town centre church and fulfils a civic role as well as a 'gathering' role for town and often deanery. It is a visible Christian presence in the centre of the town.

There is obviously great potential for growth and outreach in many ways but from a deanery perspective, growing as a hub for the deanery and a building which can enable centrally gathered acts of worship and activities. The culmination of the Walk of Witness on Good Friday is just one example of current practice.

The parish works ecumenically with Tamworth Christian Churches group and especially with 'Rooted' Church which uses St Frances' church building for their worship on a Sunday afternoon.



Welcome from the Vicar

Rev. Fr. Andrew Lythall

Thank you for your interest in this position.

The Parish of Tamworth is an incredible place with a fantastic history and a confident future. The church has been at the centre of this town for over 1200 years and the churches are still very much at the forefront of local life, and Tamworth's common identity more broadly. We are passionate about proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified, in the heart of our town.

Following new leadership in March 2023, the Parish is witnessing an exciting period of growth. Over the last year, the average attendance at services across the parish significantly improved, as did our financial outlook. We have been thrilled to welcome a number of new families and children to our worship and activities, and the age profile of our congregations has reduced. Daily visitor footfall has also increased substantially.

The reality of ministry and mission across such a large parish with diverse congregations and communities is that our ministerial resources are quite stretched. Recent, significant growth across our churches has meant that the task of ministry - and particularly pastoral care - has become larger. Whilst a strong lay team has been created, we are lacking input from a second priest who can enrich our community through bringing additional creativity, care and leadership across the parish.

This post has been developed in the context of our ambitious vision for St. Editha's to become a minster church in the near future: a Christian community dedicated to enriching, supporting and encouraging mission and ministry across the parish and beyond, and developing as a centre of excellence and resource for other churches in the deanery and diocese.

I very much commend this position to you and look forward to meeting you should you decide to apply.

Your servant in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Andrew'.

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The Parish of Tamworth

Tamworth is a lively market town in south-east Staffordshire, some 20 miles to the northeast of Birmingham and only 10 miles from Lichfield Cathedral. Tamworth enjoys excellent transport links including the M6, M6 Toll and M42 and local railway stations. Travellers for business or leisure find themselves only thirty minutes away from two regional airports with scheduled and charter flights.

Tamworth has its ancient Castle, a popular historical tourist attraction. There are excellent out of town shopping areas with most of the major supermarkets represented, plus a large Marks and Spencer store. In the town centre there are several independent retailers, restaurants, cafes, and pubs, some of them with a heritage offering. Excellent leisure facilities abound, including playgrounds, bowling greens, a large central library, and the Snowdome, one of the first real snow slopes in the UK. We are close to Drayton Manor Park, excellent sporting facilities at each of the local secondary schools, as well as several gymnasiums, and sports clubs. The town boasts a multiplex cinema, the Assembly Rooms which acts as a venue for smaller scale touring shows and concerts, as well as being a resource for local arts and musical societies.

Traditionally the town's major employers were found in light engineering, coal mining and associated industries. These declined some years ago and the town experienced significant unemployment problems. These have now been somewhat alleviated with new investment and a focus on retail and services. Most employment today is found in distribution and service industries with some light industry and engineering surviving.

There was a substantial increase in the population of the town from the 1960s onwards, mainly due to receiving families from neighbouring Birmingham. Housing is largely made up of a mixture of older houses, multi-storey flats, and mixed types of local authority dwellings

as well as recent, large estates of private housing. Tamworth town centre is undergoing a major regeneration and renewal. This has brought new businesses and energy to the town and an exciting sense of change and transition.

There are four churches in the parish that serve a population of about 25,000 people, covering the area of central Tamworth and the outlying village of Hopwas:

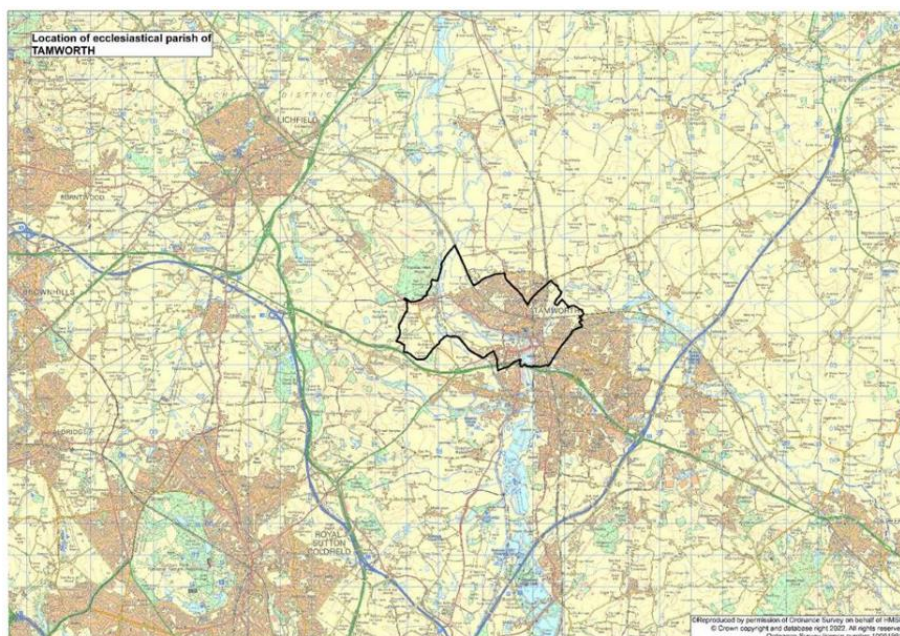
St. Editha's is the largest church in Staffordshire; a grade-I listed building that attracts some 20,000 visitors a year. The church contains a new café and bookshop, and hosts many different community groups, concerts, special events, performances and other activities throughout the year. The parish office is located in the church, which serves as an administrative hub for the parish. The church owns a well-used hall and several residential properties across the town.

St. Chad's in Hopwas is a village church with a strong sense of community. It is beautifully situated on a hill in the middle of the village and is dearly loved by local residents. It also has a churchyard, the only one in the parish, so it is where all burials take place. There are a significant number of funerals, weddings and baptisms throughout the year. The church owns a well-used hall and two residential properties.

St. Andrew's in Kettlebrook holds services on Sunday evenings. There is a developed programme of outreach and hospitality, including regular community lunches and children's activities. It is the principal focus for social activities in the local area. The congregation is positive about potential growth.

St. Francis' in Leyfields is the newest of the churches, built in the 1960s. It has the smallest congregation but is still very much an active Christian presence in its community. It currently shares its building with Rooted Church, an independent church established a couple of years ago. There are plans to significantly reorder the building to ensure better provision for community use.

As the largest and oldest church in Tamworth, and Tamworth's civic church, St. Editha's in particular is a focus as the "mother church" for the local area and is at the very heart of the Church of England's wider presence across the region.



The Challenge

In 2023, we appointed an experienced Vicar to oversee the parish as part of a growing leadership and admin team to ensure that the parish is able to flourish. Together, we are working to develop ways in which we might take advantage of the massive outreach and growth potential of our context.

Since 2024, across the parish congregations have subsequently increased, and there is a much wider scope of activities across the churches. St. Editha's is increasingly at the forefront of civic ministry and has a growing role in helping the wider town to flourish. An exciting programme of arts and events has been introduced, and visitor numbers have increased. Average weekly attendance across the parish is now some 190 people.

Our churches are centred on a Eucharistic spirituality, and it is a growing challenge to meet this provision across the parish on a Sunday. To that end, we are seeking an Assistant Priest to help meet the diverse needs of our congregations, to take a lead on ministry and mission, and to help empower and equip others in their discipleship.

We are looking for someone who is a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ: a dependable, enthusiastic, thoughtful person with an eye for detail who can make a difference in our parish through a creative, engaging ministry of energetic mission, thoughtful worship and community engagement.

We envisage this role to encompass most general aspects of traditional parish ministry, but there will be significant scope to develop a ministry which enables the post holder to flourish and engage with key interests. The parish is large and diverse enough to offer tremendous opportunities across the whole ministerial spectrum.

- The parish is well resourced in both people and plant. We are blessed with four fantastic church buildings which, whilst all being very different, are all well placed within the diverse population of Tamworth. We would like to have our doors open in hospitality to everyone, including those in need.
- The parish is also blessed with other facilities including two church halls and several properties. We want to ensure that these are well run, and are actively looking to encourage more use from the local community. There are embryonic plans to establish a homelessness hub in the parish, in collaboration with other churches.
- We have some children's groups and we have recently begun some successful initiatives in schools, including starting a new Choral Scholarship program. We would like to create further engagement initiatives with young people, in order to increase the diversity and age profile of our congregations.
- We conduct a significant number of Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals as well as civic and military services. We would like to find creative ways to use these missionally to grow our congregations.

- Tamworth is a growing market town with a considerable number of new housing developments currently being built within the benefice. The church is at the very heart of a new vision being built across the town for retail, leisure and heritage. There is an ideal opportunity for outreach.
- The Tamworth Campus of South Staffordshire College is relocating to the town centre, next to St Editha's Church. We would like to create direct links with the college with the aim of creating some sort of chaplaincy for the students and staff of the college.
- We would like, by God's grace, to foster vocations across our Benefice. We pray this will make our leadership broader and younger and identify people who could go on to support the congregations of the four churches by becoming lay ministers, readers, wardens etc. We would like to explore creating "Mission Apprentice" roles across the parish to encourage young people into discipleship and leadership.
- We need to look at increasing ministerial cooperation ecumenically, especially at St Chad's and St Francis' churches. There are embryonic partnerships forming but these need to be solidified.
- The number of visitors to St. Editha's church is growing, and we hope to increase the number of annual visitors to 50,000 by 2030. We want to be in a place where we can better meet people's needs as visitors, pilgrims and tourists. There is a significant cohort of refugees in Tamworth which bring with them complex and diverse needs; we are keen to assist with the provision of services to them.
- Keeping track of some 250 people across 4 churches is a pastoral challenge. There is a pastoral care team in the parish, but we would like a priest who is able to give their time to assist with house visiting and hospital visiting.
- The size and scope of our work means that communication is sometimes poor, particularly internally, between the four churches, but also between the church and other agencies, especially the Local Authority. This needs to be addressed if recent growth is to be sustained.
- Much of our work is reactive, in response to events or requests which present themselves at short notice. We would like to build the capacity to deal with these challenges in an effective manner. We are seeking a colleague who would be proactive in events planning and management.



Role Description

The Parish of Tamworth offers many opportunities and challenges working across four contrasting, yet complementary, environments. In partnership with the Vicar and ministry team, this post offers opportunities to lead the Benefice forward with enthusiastic leadership, vision, and direction.

This is a significant role description and encompasses wide elements of parochial ministry. If the successful candidate has a particular ministerial interest (chaplancy, pioneer planting, music, arts, events management, etc) we would be pleased to carve out space for that ministry to help the candidate to flourish in a role which offers a high degree of flexibility.

Key duties and responsibilities:

- Lead a regular discipleship course and further develop existing house groups for prayer and bible study.
- Co-ordinate Occasional Office ministry (baptisms, weddings, and funerals) throughout the parish, including preparation and follow-up, to ensure a generous, thoughtful, and evangelistic pastoral response to life events. Lead Confirmation preparation annually – there are usually more than 10 candidates per year.
- Fully participate in the liturgical cycle of the parish including regular preaching across the parish. Attend Morning Prayer 3 times a week.
- Establish new and innovative opportunities in which people can explore their spirituality through liturgy, prayer and worship and enthuse them to witness their faith so others will be encouraged, and curiosity will be roused.
- In partnership with the Children’s Worker, develop the parish’s provision for children and young people through undertaking regular schools work including assemblies and developing outreach and educational opportunities in collaboration with local partners.
- Encourage and create mission and outreach opportunities in new housing developments, with the view to exploring the possibility of a church plant.
- Develop lay leadership and ministries across the benefice, empowering, inspiring, encouraging, equipping, and training members of the church. This in turn, will enable them to use newly gained skills to reach out to the communities they serve.
- Bring an innovative, imaginative, and creative approach to evangelism across the parish in collaboration with the St. Editha’s Chaplaincy Team.

- Forge a presence within the local college and potentially develop a chaplaincy for the staff and students providing a space to explore matters of faith and promoting mental wellbeing.
- Build on existing ecumenical relationships with other churches in Tamworth promoting unity among the town's Christian churches, particularly in terms of asylum seeker and refugee support, with the view to potentially establishing a homelessness hub in Tamworth in collaboration with ecumenical partners.
- Be an active and visible Christian presence in Tamworth; look outwards to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones in the local community with a wide range of diverse people in a sensitive, friendly, and approachable manner.
- Think entrepreneurially, with practical skills to enable God's mission to become reality within the wider community.
- Work diligently to build thriving diverse multigenerational congregations, to enable the word and work of God to reach everyone, young and old alike and to develop provision at every stage of their discipleship.
- Strengthen and build links with local heritage, business, entertainment, sport, and civic communities in conjunction with the Local Authority and third sector organisations.



Church Leadership

In recent years we have taken the opportunity to embark on a new and exciting staffing structure with two full-time clergy working collaboratively across the benefice. Tamworth has five excellent Readers and six District Wardens who are all involved in preaching, and leading services. There is a growing culture of delegation, co-operation and mutual trust and support.

Each church has two District Churchwardens and there are two Parish Churchwardens for the parish as a whole. There exists a strong sense of community within our churches and recently a renewed desire to work together, as four churches in one parish. Members of the congregations also read lessons and lead intercessions in services

Person Specification

The successful candidate should ideally be able to demonstrate, where necessary with good evidence of its effectiveness, that they:

- Are a person of committed Christian faith, passionate about the Gospel, grounded in prayer and able to worship with a breadth of Christian tradition.
- Feel called by God to a ministry in Tamworth.
- Are an inspirational priest with a positive outlook, having the ability to challenge and lead in mission.
- Are a 'team player' who will collaborate with the Vicar in building teams across the benefice and enabling others to flourish in ministry and mission.
- Are excited by the prospect of ministering in four different churches across a geographically diverse parish.
- Are a person with the charisma and entrepreneurial ability to make links between churches and heritage, business, local government and civic communities.
- Have experience in mission in new housing developments, with a keenness to develop this ministry.
- Have experience of working in schools, with children, young people, and families, helping them to engage fully with the life of the church.
- Are able to bring creativity and innovation into worship and mission.
- Are a preacher who can help make faith relevant to daily lives and be relevant to all ages and stages of faith development.

- Have the ability to bring Scripture to life through delivering services with a broad inclusive theology that reflects the many traditions of the Anglican Church.
- Have experience of developing and strengthening discipleship, through study and discussion.
- Can encourage a creative use of church facilities and surrounding open spaces as places where the community can find rest and relaxation, and as places of prayer and pilgrimage.
- Can work creatively and positively with other churches in the area, in the light of the diocesan 'Shaping for Mission' process.

This is a fantastic opportunity to minister in a significant, growing, well-resourced parish context with four diverse churches comfortable with a range of styles and traditions. We envisage the priest appointed to this role to be a 'hands on' person, an evangelist who is excited by a ministry which seeks to connect church and community: a visible presence across the parish.

We would welcome applications from the breadth of theological tradition in the Church of England.



What we have to offer

This is a unique opportunity to be a part of a 1000-year-old presence in Tamworth, and to be a part of a wider story of welcome, wonder and worship at the heart of the community.

We have a positive, growing staff team of people who seek to bring out the best in each other. You will be fully supported by the Vicar, Churchwardens and the wider team, who will enable opportunities for wider learning, reflection and developing of best practice. We like to think that our churches are happy, fulfilling contexts in which to work.

We have an enthusiastic team of lay ministers and supportive congregations who will all do their part in working together with the Clergy. We are committed to promoting and resourcing lay leadership.

There is administrative support from the part-time administrator, based in the benefice office. There is a growing staff team and an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and accountability – plus a strong sense of fun!

Our churches attract visitors from all over the world. You will have the opportunity to work with a wide variety of different people, including church leaders, local dignitaries, royalty, celebrities, VIPs and other guests! There are occasionally opportunities for staff to participate in subsidised overseas visits.

There would be full reimbursement of expenses. We acknowledge the importance of regular days off and holiday entitlement and promote a healthy work-life balance.

We will give the Assistant Priest a £500 well-being grant every year to be spent as they please for the first 5 years in post



Ministry Team



Fr. Andrew Lythall
Vicar



Gwen Wilkinson
Churchwarden



Briony Brookman
Churchwarden



Andrea Treadwell
Children and Families
Worker



Leah Sandford
Lay Reader



Alan Newbold
Lay Reader



Sue Rose
Lay Reader



Ken Edwards
Director of Music



Annabel Lythall
Cafe and Bookshop
Manager



Louise Campbell
Parish Administrator



Helen Cole
Parish Finance Officer



Yumi Ishitani
Music Tutor

Not pictured:

Keith Dawson Parish Warden and Churchwarden at St. Chad's (along with Sue Rose)

Viv Atwood and Christine Simpson Churchwardens at St. Andrew's

Sue Palin Churchwarden at St. Francis'

Helen Cole Parish Finance Officer

There is a growing culture of delegation, co-operation and mutual trust and support. There exists a strong sense of community within our churches and recently a renewed desire to work together, as four churches in one parish. There is a weekly staff meeting on Monday mornings and the full ministry team meet about once every two months to plan rotas/diaries/events etc.

Pastoral Offices

Baptisms are conducted on a regular basis at St Editha's and St Chad's churches. There is a baptism preparation session for all families, and this covers what happens in the service, what baptism is and how to help the children grow up to become full members of the church in the future.

This year we hope to put forward about 20 people as candidates for Confirmation. This follows a strong tradition of presenting a significant number of candidates from across the parish every year.

There are several weddings across the parish throughout the year. We are open to marrying previously divorced persons after an interview with the Vicar. We are not currently seeking to explore new liturgical possibilities arising from the LLF process.

In common with many other churches, the number of funerals we mark across the parish is falling year on year, but there is still a significant funeral ministry in Tamworth.

Benefice Activities

The parish is a busy place, with a variety of activities happening every week throughout the church both on a regular and an occasional basis. St. Editha's hosts a number of concerts, performances, recitals and arts events through the year.

St Editha's and St Chad's hold annual **Summer and Christmas Fayres**.

St Andrew's church runs a **Lite Bite and Young at Heart** groups for the community. These are often centred around excellent food (!) and are very well attended and supported.

Knit and Natter runs weekly, providing social fellowship for people from across the parish. Members produce items for sale and are now currently engaged in knitting prayer shawls for those on the prayer lists.

Chaplaincy group: the ecumenical chaplaincy group was taken under the umbrella of St. Editha's in late 2023. It does much work in the town centre, including direct evangelism, regular prayer sessions, a weekly "Healing Rooms" session and many other initiatives.

Prayer group: this new initiative is running on a trial basis. It takes the form of a home group which meets on Thursday evenings for bible study, prayer and fellowship together.

Sunday Club: This children's group takes place every Sunday at St Editha's Church during the morning service. It is open to all children and provides a fun, creative way for children to learn about discipleship.

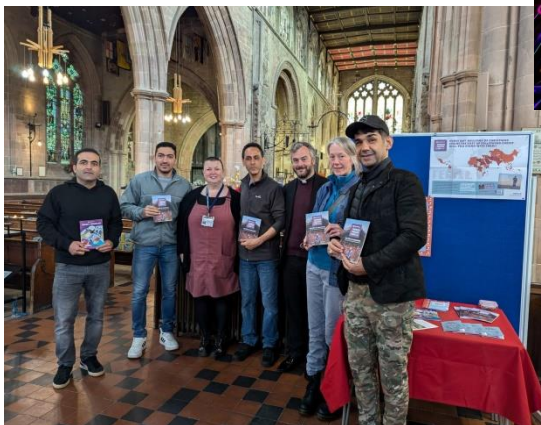
Foodbank: All churches collect for the foodbank and St Editha's office gives out Foodbank vouchers provided by the council. St Editha's also works with the local council and other

partners to provide tents, food, clothes and sleeping bags for those who need them. We have close links with the council officers in the housing department and the local police force and work with those who come into church in need of food, utilities, transport costs and housing.

Christmas Services: All churches have provided a variety of Christmas services, welcoming local schools into church for their own concerts as well as providing Christingle and Crib services, Darkness to Light and Nine Lessons and Carols and Light Up a Life services in cooperation with St Giles' Hospice and the Co-operative funeral service. St Chad's and St Editha's Churches are open daily for prayer and reflection.

Schools' work: There are no Church of England Schools in the parish. We do however have good links with several schools in the parish and they are very open to working with the churches and there are considerable opportunities in this area across the benefice.

Asylum seeker ministry: Refugees and asylum seekers are supported across the parish through clothing drives, English lessons, discipleship courses in other languages, prayer groups and other practical support.



The Churches



St. Andrew's Church (Kettlebrook)

St. Andrew's Church is a happy, friendly and welcoming place with a small congregation, mostly of older people. It nestles at the centre of the community by which it is well supported. Located to the Southeast of Tamworth Parish, Kettlebrook it is a small community consisting of mainly terraced housing. There is, however, a recent development of detached and semi-detached houses and starter homes built on former industrial land. The residential population of Kettlebrook is now a mix of families, first time buyers and the elderly.

There are embryonic links with the local football club, Tamworth FC, which neighbours the church. The congregation is stable and showed slight growth in 2024 but the church's physical location makes evangelism challenging.

The Organ is a War Memorial for both First and Second World Wars. It is in good condition and our organist chooses all the hymns for our services. The church makes full use of its newly fitted kitchen for social events and special occasions and there is a rolling programme of events throughout the year including popular community lunches. At the rear of the church is a beautiful, well-maintained garden with a spacious lawned area and cottage garden style borders. The garden provides much of the greenery and flowers used for floral displays within the church and is a lovely venue for celebrations and parties.

The Working Men's Club and local shop support us by weekly giving, provide prizes for the tombola stall and raffles for the social events and have fund raising events most months. Planned fund raising events include a quiz being held by the Working Men's club, Tamworth Male Voice Choir giving a concert also at the Working Men's club and the local shop running raffles – with all proceeds to St. Andrew's.

Services at St. Andrew's

The church tradition is best described as “central”. The principal service is on a Sunday evening at 6pm – a service of Evening Prayer with Holy Communion once a month. It is principally lay-led and the average congregation is 14.

The church is in very good order and thanks to a historic endowment, financially secure for the foreseeable future. Recent renovation and repairs include trickle vents to the windows and windowsills clad to make them level; new washroom facilities; other new fixtures and fittings and a general redecoration.



St. Chad's (Hopwas with Riverside and Tame Meadow)

St. Chad's is a small village church adjacent to Hopwas Woods. It is very pretty church and a popular venue for weddings. It has its own parsonage, a house for the vergers and a small hall situated in the centre of the village. Hopwas is a relatively affluent area of Tamworth and the church sits at the heart of the community.

Within the district there are three excellent public houses, a social club, a village primary school, several care homes as well as the Tamworth Cricket and Hockey Club. Approximately 3000 people live in the area. There are 76 people on the electoral roll.

The church building is a Grade II listed building, built in 1879 and opened in 1881. It is built of local brick and stone and the structural timbers are oak. It is of a 'Swiss Chalet' style and has a small spirelet which was recently recovered with timber shingles. Our latest Quinquennial inspection was good, and no major repairs or maintenance are required.

The church owns a significant amount of land. The churchyard is approximately 1 acre in size and located to the North and East of the church and has a mix of burial plots and a memorial

plot for interment of ashes. There is a small area to the South of the church which is reserved for interment of ashes only. We have a further field reserved for graveyard extension in the future and other undesignated lands which are currently leased out. There is a small hall which is underused at present. We employ a Verger on a half-time basis to keep everything in order.

We have strong links with Thomas Barnes Primary School. The children come into church for Harvest and Christmas services, and we enjoyed a wonderful Leavers service in July. The school is keen to develop links further. We also welcomed a preschool group to our hall in January 2025 and there is much potential in working together. Ecumenically, we have close ties with Hopwas Methodist Chapel where we take it in turns to host a joint service when there is a 5th Sunday in the month.

Services at St. Chad's

The church tradition is best described as “central”. We hold a Holy Communion service every Sunday Morning at 10.30am. The average service attendance is around 30, and that number is generally growing. Worship is fairly traditional, but also relaxed and the congregation is open to new ideas. We occasionally host larger services on behalf of the parish and celebrate several festivals throughout the year in addition to our Sunday provision.

We have a lovely organ which has been recently restored and this is played for many of our Sunday services, or a CD is used when there is no organist present.



St. Editha's Church, Tamworth (town centre)

St. Editha's Church is the largest parish church in Staffordshire. It is wonderfully situated right in the heart of Tamworth, adjacent to the marketplace and close to the Castle. It is well-loved by the townspeople and the surrounding area, much used for occasional offices

and civic events. There is a significant and increasing footfall from tourists and pilgrims, following extensive efforts to develop an ambitious music and arts program through the year. In 2023 we welcomed some 20,000 visitors and we hope that we will attract 50,000 visitors annually by 2030.

We recently finished a significant internal reordering in church to install a new café and bookshop. This has helped to increase footfall and enhanced our ministry of hospitality and welcome. The Church Administrator's Office has been brought into Church, allowing us to significantly increase church opening hours. There is a dedicated, faithful team of volunteers who help keep ministry and mission going in the heart of the town, and an ecumenical Chaplaincy group who play a key role in our evangelism and outreach.

Architecturally, St. Editha's is Grade I Listed, and is one of the major heritage buildings in the Midlands. It contains a double spiral staircase and a Grade I listed Harrison and Harrison organ which has been recently restored. The parish church stands as a significant landmark in the centre of the town. Despite its age there are no major issues with the building and the church is in good order, thanks to a strong band of volunteers from within the congregation and across the parish who keep the many aspects of our mission and ministry working smoothly.

The past two years have seen significant, sustained growth at St. Editha's. The congregation has both grown and become substantially younger. We have a growing group of worshippers willing to take an active part in worship; we are very keen to encourage lay ministry and vocations. There is also a small WhatsApp prayer group started by a member of the congregation, regular house groups, bible study groups and teaching workshops.

In late 2023 we launched an ambitious bid to become a Minster Church and this objective underlines and shapes our strategy and priorities moving forward. The PCC is passionate about achieving this vision within the next 5 years.

Services at St Editha's

The church tradition is mixed but best described as "modern Catholic". St. Editha's holds a variety of worship services, formal and informal, said and sung, traditional and contemporary. Usual Sunday attendance is about 125; average weekday attendance is 20. Special weeknight services for feasts and festivals (Ascension Day, etc) average 40 and we are pleased to regularly host services for the wider deanery – there were three of these in 2024 and the average attendance was 120. Incense is occasionally used.

Sundays

8.30am Said Eucharist (2nd Sunday of the month only) – *average attendance 10*

10.00am Sung Eucharist with Children's group – *average attendance 100*

6.00pm Choral Evensong (the 1st Sunday of the month this is replaced with "Café Church") – *average attendance 25*

Wednesdays

10.15am Said Eucharist – *average attendance 20*

Morning Prayer is said every day in the church. We celebrate most red letter days and principal feasts with additional services on midweek evenings.

The Church Buildings attached to St. Editha's

The Church Hall on College Lane dates from the early 19th Century and is not listed although it is within a conservation area. Downstairs it is well used by the local community, but upstairs requires substantial renovation. A project is currently underway to completely renovate the building at a cost of some £600,000. When the Hall is restored it will provide a significant town centre location for a number of uses.

St. Editha's, both in its own right and through subsidiary trusts, owns 4 houses in the town centre. These are used for a variety of purposes including private lets and as emergency accommodation.

Music at St Editha's

St. Editha's boasts a growing choir led by our highly experienced Organist/Choir master. In answer to prayer, our choir has now grown to a healthy number of enthusiastic choristers. A highly successful Choral Scholarship scheme was introduced in September 2023 and we have been thrilled to welcome 8 children into the choir; there is a waiting list for new recruits. Music tends to be traditional except at informal services where modern worship songs are used; we welcome a band on occasion and the congregation is fairly open minded about musical styles. We are pleased to welcome visiting choirs from various cathedrals etc 2 or 3 times a year.

Links between St. Editha's and the Town

St. Editha's sits at the very heart of Tamworth, both physically and strategically and it is a significant stakeholder in the town. There are strong and growing links with the Local Authority and other similar organisations and the church is at the heart of local decision making.

The Vicar of Tamworth is the Chaplain to the Mayor as well as Chaplain for the local branches of RAFA, British Legion and Royal Navy. Remembrance Day Services are celebrated with a parade through town followed by a service of remembrance both outside and in church supported by all armed forces and the local population. There is a great working relationship with the armed and cadet forces in Tamworth and across Staffordshire.

St. Editha's work closely with Tamworth Borough Council to provide Food Bank vouchers, sleeping bags, tents, and other support for the homeless and those less well off, especially in the current economic climate. There is great scope for a developing ministry out of St. Editha's to the homeless and refugees (St. Editha's is seen as the principal stakeholder for asylum seeker response in Tamworth). Church members are active in many initiatives and organisations in the Town including Rotary, Soroptimists, Tamworth Heritage, twinning (with Bad Laasphe in Germany) and others.



St. Francis Church - Leyfields

St. Francis church is the newest church within the parish, built in the 1960's. It is located in the heart of the Leyfields, one of the most economically challenged areas in Tamworth although the area is improving. It is ranked in the lowest quartile as one of the most deprived areas in the UK. The Leyfields consists of 3-storey flats, maisonettes, bungalows and houses; a mixture of council accommodation and private housing, many people buying their council houses. There are a significant number of young families in the area.

The church was built on a post-war housing estate and often talked of being the Birmingham overspill. The estate also has St. Andrew's Methodist church, a Sure Start Centre, shops and Wigginton Park, the home to Tamworth Rugby Union Football Club. There are 3 pubs local to the church, Larkhall nursery and infant school, Flaxhill Junior School, Coton Green school (with which we have growing links) and Rawlett High school, all of which are friendly to the church.

It is fair to say that St. Francis has been treading water for a few years, and with an average congregation of 10, mostly elderly people, the church needs additional energy, time and vision if it is to flourish. There is an excellent, committed team of Churchwardens and a lot of goodwill between church and the local community.

The church was thoroughly cleaned, redecorated and slightly reordered in June 2023, making the space much more attractive and usable. Currently we have one church service a week on a Sunday morning, with a mix of Said Eucharist and Morning Prayer. Recently an evangelical group - Rooted Church - has begun to use the church for a few hours on Sunday afternoons and there is a growing partnership between us. Music is both traditional and contemporary and played via a CD player.

It is hoped that we can hire out St. Francis' Church in the daytime during the week to increase funds. There is a lot of potential here and much could be done with the building, not least because it is located in the heart of its community. There is also a significant garden to the rear, ideal for events etc. St Francis' has hosted many Advent and Lent courses for the Parish and we hope to use it much more for evening church meetings (for which it is a great venue) such as discipleship courses, PCC meetings and more.

Services at St. Francis'

The church tradition is best described as "open Evangelical". The principal service is on a Sunday morning at 10am – a service of Morning Prayer with Holy Communion once a month. It is principally lay-led and the average congregation is 10.



Benefice Finances

As a larger parish we had to register as a charity in 2009 and we are on the charities commission as The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Tamworth, Registered Charity Number 1133982. Our published accounts are the consolidation of the four churches.

We are in the fortunate position of having significant fixed assets in the parish. We have fixed assets valued at some £3m including our five properties and various CCLA investments specific to individual churches and mostly for restricted purposes. That said, cash flow is generally tight.

There are funds available for special projects in the form of supporting trusts; these could be made available to the successful applicant for particular areas of ministry and mission (e.g. events, planting, etc).

We have always had the policy of paying the parish Common Fund in full each year and we were able to hold true to this for all but one year. We have managed to do this even though we have been running at a deficit for many years, relying on the generosity of previous benefactors to pay the Common Fund. We are hoping that 2023 will be the first year in many that we have not operated at a loss.

In 2019 we were heading into a crisis by depleting the last of our unrestricted reserves but were blessed by a totally unexpected bequest of £812k. This has allowed us to clear our debts and continue to pay our full parish Common Fund monthly and on time.

The Diocesan changes to Common Fund, with the introduction of the Low Income Communities Allocation, has helped reduce the pressure on our accounts.

Our income varies depending upon our fund-raising targets to meet the current restoration projects. Presently, with our regular giving, this remains insufficient to cover our basic expenditure including Common Fund although we are optimistic about rebalancing this going forward.

In order to meet the challenge of transforming our finances into a regular surplus we are taking several steps. Further work on stewardship, along with other much needed discipleship training, will be an important mission action point going forward.

The following table has our unrestricted income and expenditure over the last five years, with the last two years showing the impact of Covid. Expenditure is in 2 columns to demonstrate the level of Common Fund and other expenditure and the 2020 figures show both including and excluding the 2020 bequest mentioned above.

Consolidated Parish Accounts 2022

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	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Incoming resources							
Donations & legacies	2a	85,310	-	12,695	-	98,005	906,075
Charitable activities	2b	34,650	-	100	-	34,750	19,525
Other trading activities	2c	21,813	-	-	-	21,813	18,800
Investments	2d	24,005	1,118	17,151	-	42,274	29,143
Other	2e	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total incoming		165,778	1,118	29,946	-	196,842	973,543
Resources expended							
Raising funds	3a	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	3b	215,249	595	26,974	-	242,818	239,918
Other	3c	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expended		215,249	595	26,974	-	242,818	239,918
Net before transfers		(49,471)	523	2,972	-	(45,976)	733,625
Transfers between funds		56,000	(544)	(55,456)	-	-	-
Net funds movement		6,529	(21)	(52,484)	-	(45,976)	733,625
Gains on revaluations							
Fixed assets		-	-	61,431	60,988	122,419	87,929
Investments		83,315	-	23,180	106,653	213,148	66,866
Total funds movement		89,844	(21)	32,127	167,641	289,591	888,420
Funds at 1 January		905,238	26,589	931,845	1,414,941	3,278,613	2,390,193
Funds at 31 December		995,082	26,568	963,972	1,582,582	3,568,204	3,278,613

Clergy Housing

The Assistant Priest will reside in the Parsonage at Hopwas.

The Parsonage is adjacent to the church and situated, as is the church, at the foot of Hopwas Wood in the village of Hopwas. It is a modern and spacious double glazed, 4 bedroomed house with picture windows and a large modern kitchen. The living room leads into a large, mature garden and there is ample space for parking and a garage.

There are 2 excellent pubs within walking distance. The house is very well connected to public transport; there are good bus links to the Tamworth town centre and to Lichfield. Tamworth Railway Station is an 8 minute drive away; the train to Birmingham New Street takes just 15 minutes; London Euston takes 70 minutes.

Repairs have recently been carried out which means that the house is in excellent condition. With its quiet, beautiful surroundings and lovely mature garden, it is an idyllic place to live.



Strategic Direction

The Parish has a well-developed, aspirational strategic framework in place for future growth and development, based around three key targets which have been formulated following extensive consultation with the PCC and other stakeholders across the parish and wider deanery. The goals are principally focussed around St. Editha's but the other churches in the benefice also feed into the overall objectives. These are, namely:

- 1. To develop centres of excellence for liturgy and music**
- 2. To develop places of outreach, heritage and lifelong learning**
- 3. To develop resourcing churches for the wider deanery and diocese**

The full framework is available upon request.

The Diocese also has a new strategic framework which can be viewed online:

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/shaping-for-mission/>

The PCC was asked to think about how three ways in which Parish of Tamworth might complement the diocesan strategy:

- **34,000 new disciples**
 - As one of the fastest growing parishes in the diocese we are well equipped to make new disciples in the community
- **Community engagement plan for every parish**
 - We have already developed this as part of our wider strategic framework, and are revising it on a rolling basis
- **Our diversity reflects community diversity**
 - This is already the case in our parish amongst a representative sample of the congregation; we are working on ways in which to diversify our leadership team

And which objectives the Parish of Tamworth might find more challenging:

- **Diversity seen in diocesan governance**
 - The Parish of Tamworth is not in a position to enable the diocese to meet this target
- **200 new worshipping communities a year**
 - We are looking at the possibility of starting a fresh expression in 2025; this will be fairly resource intensive and will need to be done in collaboration with deanery partners
- **Connection with every primary and secondary school**
 - Despite employing a Children's Worker, this is simply not possible in a parish as large as Tamworth and does not take into consideration the challenging local complexities of access to schools.

Safeguarding

We have a clear understanding that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the parish. We foster a culture of trust and mutual accountability in leadership and in a general sense. There have been no significant safeguarding issues in the parish for many years.

We have a named Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer for the benefice who works closely with the diocese. Our PCC and DCCs pay attention to national and diocesan developments and advice in this area and discuss and adopt appropriate policies.

Our aim is that we will promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks



Further details

If this role excites you, then we would love to hear from you.
Full details from lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies

For an informal conversation about this role and its context, feel free to contact the Vicar,
Rev Andrew Lythall: aslythall@gmail.com

The Benefice website is www.parishoftamworth.co.uk
St. Editha's has its own website: www.stedithatamworth.co.uk

Closing date for applications: X

Shortlisting: X

Interviews: X

