



Priest-in-Charge

## **THE OFFCHURCH GROUP**

St Gregory, Offchurch

St Margaret, Hunningham

St John the Baptist, Wappenbury with Eathorpe

St Michael, Weston-under-Wetherley

0.5 Stipendiary

## **PARISH PROFILE**



## Introduction and Deanery Summary

The Southam Deanery is the smallest Deanery in the Coventry diocese, currently made up of 16 parishes within a six-mile radius of the market town of Southam.

As a Deanery we have a strong focus on mission together, with a number of joint initiatives taking place, from a 'Mega Messy church', to 'Forest Church', and joint worship.

The Deanery chapter is supportive, friendly, and collegiate, and we would welcome new colleagues to join us.

Currently we have 10 of our 16 parishes in interregnum, which has been a challenge for our small clergy team, but we have a wealth of committed and talented lay people who are doing all they can to support their parishes during their interregnums. As I have helped to cover the parishes in vacancy I have been warmly welcomed and have greatly appreciated their friendly nature and support in my role as a relatively new Area Dean.

I am in discussions with the new Mission Hub based in Leamington Spa to see what support can be offered as this new initiative develops.

We have recently developed a Deanery plan, but this is currently under review as we wait to see what response we receive to the current vacancies, but the current situation has also been a means of increasing unity.

HS2 has a significant effect on the Deanery as a whole, as we lie directly in the path of the planned route and continuing work has had a major impact on the local environment and regular, sometimes unexpected road closures! We are also experiencing huge changes with new housing developments in a number of villages and Southam town itself, so working together and supporting each other, as well as developing new leaders and exciting new ideas for growth will become even more important.

Our Deanery has some of the most attractive and historic churches in the diocese, which is, of course a mixed blessing, as often small and elderly congregations struggle with the cost of maintenance and development.

As someone who was not expecting to be called into rural ministry I can confidently state that I have found in our parishes and our Deanery places of unexpected opportunity and wonderful blessing, but of course despite the relative affluence of our communities there are still areas of real need, and these are often hidden. We work closely with the local foodbank to support those in need, and often our parishes have close contacts with the farming community.

On behalf of myself, and John Eld, the Deanery lay-chair, we look forward to new colleagues who will be able to bring their gifts to our small, outward-looking Deanery.

**Rev Andy Batchelor (Area Dean)**





**The Offchurch Group** is a caring and welcoming worshipping community, rooted in the love of Jesus and prayer. We attract folk from the five villages of the Parish and beyond. We have one Parish Church, three Chapels of Ease, two Churchwardens, two (Lay) Readers and just one PCC.

We worship in the Parish Church of St Gregory in Offchurch on three Sundays in the month, but on the first Sunday of the month our worship is led by our young people who make up the Pilgrim Puppets team and is held in St Margaret's, our Chapel of Ease in Hunningham. Evensong is offered once a month in St Michael's, the Chapel of Ease in Weston under Wetherley and occasionally services are held in St John's, the Chapel of Ease in Wappenbury.

We hold Messy Church four times a year and for three days over the summer holidays, which attracts a good number of families, and there is a thriving Bible study group which meets on a Monday morning.

The practical aspects of running our church and its buildings are managed by a dedicated band of volunteers and the inevitable rotas. We have a Treasurer, a PCC Secretary and an Administrator who manages the arrangements for baptisms, weddings, funerals and memorials. Three small groups plan outreach, worship and care of the fabric of our four buildings. A monthly Community Café offers soup lunches and afternoon teas to reach the wider community.

Our finances are in a stable position after a stewardship campaign last year and we continue to support charities and outreach, notably CORD, a locally based charity working in countries recovering from conflict.

We long to reach more people across our villages with the message of the love Jesus has for each of them and are looking for someone who shares that longing.

## BACKGROUND TO THE POST

The benefice of the Offchurch Group (TOG) was created from a merger of the parishes of Hunningham, Offchurch, Wappenbury with Eathorpe, and Weston-under-Wetherley in 2017, following the retirement of the last-but-one incumbent. These lie in a rural area but very close to the attractive and popular town of Royal Leamington Spa. The parishes were historically part of a group of six parishes which formed 'the Feldon Group'. Each of the church congregations in the newly formed Offchurch Group fully supported this change, seeing it as an opportunity to pool resources and to support each other, and this has indeed been the case.

The Offchurch Group has developed and improved in many aspects under the last, now retired, incumbent and we are in a strong position to move forward in spite of the challenges which face many in our situation. As part of the change, we have formed one PCC, and moved to one main place of worship the Parish church of St Gregory in which services take place every week except on 5th Sundays when a service is held in one of the other churches in the Group and, on the first Sunday in most months, a "Come2Worship" service is held in Hunningham led by our young people and the Pilgrim Puppets.

Evensong is held at St Michael's every third Sunday. The other churches are Chapels of Ease, with services held less frequently (once or twice a month), and predominantly lay-led. As in previous periods of vacancy, the current period has brought to the fore those who have stepped out of their comfort zone, and given more of their time, to lead services and take on other roles, and there has been a noticeable growth in faith and confidence. However, we recognise the need for a more organised method for identifying and training potential leaders. Currently lay members are responsible for all aspects of church life and we would anticipate a new incumbent having a large pool of experience to draw on as part of a leadership team.

'Friends' accounts have been established in each village to help maintain the buildings into which donations are made by some church members and by non-church members. We have one Treasurer but each church has an identified person to link with the Treasurer to undertake tasks such as recording and banking income. We therefore believe that this post is not only do-able but actually an attractive post for someone seeking to minister in a rural context but with only one PCC and usually no more than one Sunday service currently a week.

This profile seeks to give interested parties an initial overview of the Offchurch Group in the form of an easy-to-digest A to Z, with more detailed descriptions of certain aspects appearing in the appendices.



## **ROLE SPECIFICATION**

The role of this post is to lead the churches in fulfilling the Diocesan Mission Purpose of:

- Worshipping God
- Making New Disciples
- Transforming Communities.

This will be achieved by developing 8 Essential Qualities in the life of the church:  
Empowering Leadership, Gift-oriented Ministry, Passionate Spirituality, Inspiring Worship,  
Holistic Small Groups, Need-oriented Outreach, Loving Relationships and Functional  
Structures

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

We welcome applications from candidates who:

- Have a deep love of Jesus Christ alongside a desire to share that love in our 5 small rural villages, by being able to create and maintain positive relationships with people of all ages, and help lead them into experiencing more of God's love.
- Are empowering leaders, who can identify, train and equip more people for serving God in leadership roles and in using the gifts and skills God gives people, building on the positive foundation we already have in this area.
- Will encourage us in our faith, making us more confident in sharing our faith with one another and those in our communities.
- Has a track record in helping worship be inspiring and attractive for a younger age range.

## **Vicarage**

The post offers a vicarage; a large, 5-bedroom, attractive house with grounds in Hunningham.



## An A – Z of The Offchurch Group

**Aspiration** We are an aspiring benefice, as a group we have an indomitable spirit, an immense sense of fellowship and a determination to grow in God's love.

**Buildings** The Offchurch Group is a collection of four ancient, beautiful church buildings: St Gregory, Offchurch is the oldest dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century; St Margaret, Hunningham; St Michael, Weston-under-Wetherley and St John the Baptist, Wappenbury with Eathorpe being the 'youngest' dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Please read more about our glorious buildings in **appendix 1**.



**Community** Our communities are lively and active. Offchurch has a popular Village Hall, as do Weston and Eathorpe and an Events Group which arranges a variety of social and fund-raising events. There is also a Sports Club, Afternoon Club, Garden Club, Flower Club, Reading Circle, an informal Craft group and a Community Café. The village comes together to celebrate national events such as the ascension and coronation of the King, and to organise open gardens etc. The Stag is an award winning pub and restaurant, popular with locals and many from much further afield. Hunningham is blessed with Hill Top Farm, a working farm, extensive shop and restaurant with a reputation for selling local good quality food and goods, as well as a popular pub. Weston runs a weekly Mothers and Toddlers Group and Eathorpe a monthly Coffee and Cake morning. The Eathorpe Easter Egg-Rolling day was not to be missed! These are just the highlights of our vibrant and friendly group of villages.

**Demographics** The villages are quintessentially English country villages, with relatively high average house prices (500-700k) and small populations - Offchurch has approximately 200 residents as at the 2021 Census, Hunningham c.200, Wappenbury and Eathorpe c.200 and Weston the largest village with a population of c. 400. There is little employment in the villages beyond the pubs in Offchurch and Hunningham and Wethele Manor (a venue for weddings and events with accommodation) at Weston. The majority of people travel away from the villages to work or work from home for organisations based elsewhere. Offchurch is surrounded by farms so there is agricultural employment including equestrian work and game keeping. The socio-economic make-up of the population of the four villages is very similar across the area with between 45% and 55% of the population employed in either the Higher or Lower Managerial, Administrative and Professional Occupations. None of the villages has more than 5% of the population who have never worked or are long-term unemployed. All of the parishes are predominantly (over 90%) white British. A high proportion (70%+) identify as Christian but this is not reflected in congregation sizes.

**Encouraging** others is of great importance to us; while it may not be formally reflected in the 8 essentials survey results, we are a hugely encouraging group of people, informally pushing each other gently towards a place where we can all explore our growing faith and the use of our talents, whether musically, creatively, organisationally, spiritually, academically or otherwise. This informal spirit for encouragement needs to be harnessed to improve our Effective Structures and we believe that everyone will embrace that opportunity to be further empowered.



**Finance** When The Offchurch Group was formed in 2017, by merging four adjacent parishes, it was decided to manage the funding of TOG's operating costs separately from the costs of managing its four buildings, namely our parish church of St Gregory and our three Chapels of Ease. Therefore, separate accounts are kept for TOG operating costs and for each of its four buildings. These arrangements were put in place, because the costs of managing and maintaining four medieval buildings are considerable and some people in the five villages within the parish are happy to support the upkeep of their village church, but they do not wish to support the spiritual activities of the parish. TOG's operating costs are largely met by the church membership.

Establishing TOG involved a step of faith financially, because in 2017 it was not certain that TOG would be able cover its operating costs and it was accepted that it may need to draw upon reserves until its income grew under the leadership of a new incumbent. However, TOG was blessed financially for the first three years of its existence, with income exceeding expenditure, aided by a successful stewardship campaign.

Since then, a combination of losing a small number of major regular donors, the effects of the covid pandemic and the rising cost of living has caused this situation to reverse and in the last three years TOG has had to draw on its reserves. In 2023, expenditure on operating costs was around £3,000 more than income. However, this situation is being addressed in 2024 through another stewardship campaign. TOG continues to have substantial reserves of just over £60,000 and has never failed to pay its parish share in full.

Attached (at **Appendix 2**) is a simplified summary of TOG's income and expenditure for the 12 months ending 31 December 2023, together with a fuller description of how TOG's finances are managed.

For each of TOG's buildings there is a 'Friends' account into which donations are made by some church members and by non-church members and, to a greater or lesser extent, each has some reserves. Annual income typically covers the annual maintenance costs, but occasionally major repairs, or in the case of St Michael's the theft of a large area of lead roof, has drained reserves, or worse: in the case of St Michael's the theft has left them with a bill of around £150,000 that is currently unaffordable, so a cheaper temporary repair has been carried out.

**Growth** It is fair to say that there have been peaks and troughs in adult attendance over the last 5 years, but we are currently on an upward curve. Since the pandemic, helped by our investment and commitment to the technology which allows us to deliver services online, people have returned steadily to attend services in person. There is more to be done, and especially where younger people and children are concerned but it is worth mentioning that at our Parish Day ('Shaping our Future with Jesus') in March 2023, where we had an opportunity to discuss the future of the group led by Reverend Daniel Corlett, from the Rural Hub Church, that we recognised that the growth of the church does not simply equate to attendance in one church on a Sunday morning. We discussed the many options for increasing our outreach in ways which aim to bring our communities closer to God without necessarily seeing those people at services. We would want to explore this balance further in order to make sure that we include all relevant 'measures' by which to assess our progress in the 8 essentials.

**Holistic:** Small Groups are evident in all of the churches with often a small dedicated group of people. For example, the Bible Study group is a spiritual, sociable, supportive, sharing group meets weekly, usually on Monday mornings, to read and discuss the Bible freely with the help of study guides. Meeting in a private home, with some members coming in on Zoom, there is a regular attendance of about 12. Other ad hoc groups also meet during Lent and follow study guides and courses.



Many of the congregation at St Margaret's are involved in one of a number of groups: a weekly cell group, monthly bible study group and a weekly Puppet Group for adults and children. Weston has a long-standing monthly bible study group. On Good Friday every year, there is a contemplative pilgrimage walk (dogs included), largely around the parish boundaries that takes about 6 hours.

Across the group, many people would say that they take part in a group whether that be a planning group, for worship or outreach, a rota for readings and prayers, a music group, or catering, flowers and events. We are a collection of folk who like to get involved, although there is no pressure to do so, and time and again this has enabled us to achieve the seemingly impossible: continuing to provide inspiring, theologically-rooted services during times of vacancy without relying solely on visiting clergy is a testament to our willingness to be instrumental in developing our church's role in the communities.

As a group we have positive **attitudes towards change** which are generally managed by the PFF, PFO, PFW and PCC in their meetings.

A scenic view of a historic town in England, featuring a large Gothic cathedral with a tall spire rising above the rooftops. The town is built on a hillside overlooking a river, with lush greenery and a stone wall separating the buildings from the water. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

construction having caused significant disruption especially for Offchurch residents. The line runs across Hunningham Road which links Hunningham with Offchurch. An Action Group which was formed to provide information and challenge the project still operates as construction continues.

**Music for Worship** Among our many blessings as a church community, our musicians deserve more than a mention! We enjoy live music at all services, with combinations of organ, piano, flutes and voices. Our musicians enhance our experience of worship with the beauty of their playing and the way in which the choice of music is woven through our services.



**Next Steps** In this time of vacancy we have found ourselves very much looking to the future. The Parish Day took place just prior to our current vacancy and helped us to brainstorm many wide-ranging options for services, outreach and development. The 8 Essentials Survey added to our knowledge of areas of strength and weakness and, again, gave us ideas for what those next steps might be. On the minds of many are the families and young people of our communities. It seems that we are poised to create a strategic direction for our Church based on recent thinking and discussion, and we are excited to do so following an appointment to this post. Our need for this strong leadership, support and encouragement is evident and we have a real sense of excitement for what the next year holds. **Our vision for the coming 3- 5 years is for a stable TOG with more people involved and with the group enjoying a stable financial footing. We look forward to more engagement with all in our communities and our young families in particular.**



**Outreach** One of the mainstays of our outreach programme is Messy Church which meets quarterly including a three-day summer special. We have been running with variations for well over 10 years now. Messy Church runs at Weston under Wetherley, as the hall is the most convenient and Weston is our priority as it is the largest of the 5 villages by population. However, we do attract families from a wide area well beyond the 5 villages. We receive input from the youth ministry, Thrive, although at present we attract much younger families.



We have just under 90 children who are invited by email every time and attendance over the last year has averaged just under 17 children. Messy Church is for families so these numbers don't reflect the parents, carers and grandparents who attend and who we really hope will gain something by being there.

Recently as a result of the Mother and Toddler Group in Weston being run by members of the church (not by the church) we have been attracting a younger age group and have had to adapt to accommodate them. This has brought us in to contact with a number of new families. Baptisms are also a useful entry point for families.

Many children as they grow older move from Messy Church to Pilgrim Puppets and then back gain to help with Messy Church and we try to foster this investment in our young people. Our vision for Messy church is evolving however and we are very much focusing on the intergenerational church where there really should be no age limits or restrictions on who attends. We are also actively looking at the promise we make as a church community to help the children who are baptised to follow God, but this needs more work in terms of follow-up.



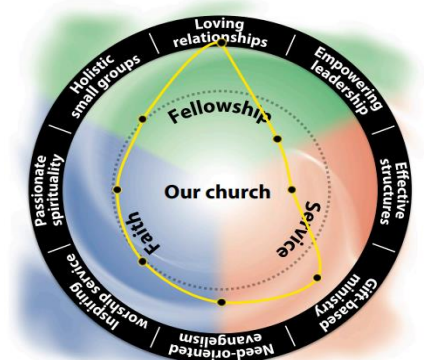
**Prayer** is central to all that we do, from our prayers of intercession which are led via a rota system by members of the congregation, to our prayer fellowship group, who pray for those in need in the community and across the world on a weekly basis.

**Qualities** A Natural Church Development Survey has been carried out to establish the current culture and values of the Offchurch Group. The headlines are that Faith and Fellowship come more naturally to us, whereas Service is an area for development.

We score very highly in Loving Relationships and Gift-based Ministry which in '8 essentials' language means that we are strongly bound together through the giving and receiving of justice, truth and grace and able to share God's grace in its many forms throughout our communities.

Empowering Leadership and Effective Structures are our areas for development. We need to continue to work on raising up new leaders and releasing the potential God has placed in each of us; and to improve, with guidance and support from our new incumbent, our structures to ensure that we effectively steward the time, resources and talents with which we are blessed.

To that end we have identified the need for an action plan beginning with the 'next steps' in the 8 essentials report as well as the critical input of our next incumbent. We are no doubt a community of active, faithful and determined people with many strong qualities; using those gifts to work on our areas for development so that they rise up to meet our strongest values will, we believe make us



ready to serve and grow our church community in the coming years. The Natural Church Development Survey results appear at **Appendix 3**.

**Relationships** What stood out from the Natural Church Development Survey was that Loving Relationships was a real strength for us in the Offchurch Group -but we did not need the survey to tell us that! Visitors comment consistently on our strong fellowship and we live and breathe the love we have for each other on a daily basis. We try hard to give The Peace briefly, but usually fail as this opportunity for us to hug, give thanks for and show our affection for each other usually proves too difficult to resist! However, those bonds are far deeper than this and many of our members rely heavily on each other's support and friendship. Our priest-in charge has historically proved a lynch-pin for this strong fellowship, so understanding its importance to us is a key aspect of this role. Likewise, our **Pastoral Care** is informal with individuals covering requirements as needed, and the incumbent would, we anticipate, act as focal point for this.

**Services** By way of example, a snapshot of forthcoming services is included at **Appendix**

**4**. In summary, in most months, our young people lead a Come2Worship service at St

Margaret's; at least 2 Holy Communion services are offered and usually one Sunday Service. Evensong takes place at Weston every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. We carefully plan the liturgical and seasonal events such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday as well as planning regular special events. Coming up a Pet Service has been planned, as well as a Songs of Praise to which the community has



been asked to contribute their favourite hymn and reasons for their choice. How is this continuing while we are in vacancy? We are blessed with a team of dedicated lay readers and members of the congregation, as well as loyal visiting clergy, through whom we have been able to sustain a full, meaningful and inspiring calendar of worship throughout this and previous vacancies; we feel this is a testament to the love which fills this community and the importance of the church in their lives.

## Theologically-rooted

**services** Following that discussion of services, it is important to say that all of our services are deeply theologically rooted. Our lay readers and speakers use their gifts to great effect when planning reflections and together with our focus on prayer this has meant that even when we have been without a member of the clergy our worship is no less purposeful.



**Unity** emphasises the harmony and cohesion within our church community suggesting that despite occasional individual differences, the congregation works together toward common goals and supports each other. We thrive on a profound sense of community where members come together as one body united in faith and purpose. We embrace diversity and aim to ensure that every voice is heard and valued. This spirit of unity fosters a harmonious environment where collaboration and mutual support are paramount.

**Village Hall** The Offchurch Village Hall is situated opposite St Gregory's and is a hub for much of the activity in the village. Run by a small, dedicated committee and available for church-related activities as well as for hire by the general public, it provides superb facilities for entertaining or hosting meetings, on a small or large scale. With the village field adjacent to the hall, complete with a children's playground, the hall attracts a wide range of people and events. Outdoor services have been held on the field with great success. The village halls at Eathorpe and Weston are also well used, Weston for our Messy Church events.



**Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals** There are small numbers of weddings, funerals and baptisms at each of the churches. There are typically 2-3 of each event annually at each church, give or take, and Weston under Wetherley is close to a popular wedding venue so can also attract weddings. What is of note is that many of these events are well attended, by invitation, by members of the TOG congregations and there is a marvellous sense of community, support and joy as we help people to celebrate or to mark these occasions. We occasionally Zoom weddings, baptisms and funerals with attendees in the UK and abroad; we can do this in any of the Chapels of Ease. We try to maintain links with our newly wedded couples and with families following a baptism. We keep a Book of Remembrance and we remember those who



have passed and their families in our weekly intercessions.

**X marks the spot!** This is how we chose to use the letter X – to convey to you how special we feel our churches and villages are, how much we think you will love them and come to regard them as home, to feel a part of our unique family, and to be part of this place where God is truly at work!

**Young people** - None of the villages has a school and children attend primary schools in Cubbington and Radford Semele and secondary schools in Southam, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa. Through our Messy Church sessions and other activities, we are able to maintain a network of many of these children as well as the youngest infants in the parishes and their families. Messy Church has provided an excellent opportunity to meet these children and their parents and for them to meet each other since they do not meet at the school gate. There is a fuller description of our work with young people – including details of our famous Pilgrim Puppets at **Appendix 5**.



We are trying to ensure we meet all the safeguarding requirements as set out by the Church of England and have one Parish Safeguarding Officer to oversee this important aspect for the whole Group. We use the CofE Dashboard to record and update the training records of all PCC Members and those who need to be trained because of their role in the life of the church. A number of our congregation and PCC Members are also DBS cleared to an enhanced level.

**Zoom** Since the first lockdown we have offered a facility for worshippers to attend services by Zoom, both at St Gregory's and at some other churches. We have a team of dedicated technical personnel who do sterling work 'on the buttons'. The technology and our commitment to providing this flexibility has ensured a higher overall attendance at services and a welcome means of participation – we have Zoomed services to members in hospital, those who are unable to leave their home for a range of reasons, to those who are abroad or visiting family away from the villages.



## Appendix 1 Buildings

**St Gregory's, Offchurch** The church dates from 900 AD and is reputed to have been established by King Offa. It is a small church which can accommodate just over 100 people comfortably. The Quinquennial Inspection was conducted in 2023. As expected there was a list of minor repairs comprising pointing to stonework, gutters etc which have all been completed and the cost paid out of their Deposit Account.

There is a new water supply and very good facilities for serving tea and coffee but no toilet. Planning Permission and a Faculty were granted to build an external timber WC to the north of the tower and Trench Arch has been laid. However Planning Consent is to be varied to realign this building.

There is a graveyard which is maintained by TOG members with the help of local contractors. It is kept as a wildlife sanctuary and is very pretty and peaceful. There is plenty of space for more graves and a new area for the burial of ashes has just been established. We have a plan of the newer part of the churchyard and are working to map the remainder. A new history of the village from 1820 to 1980 explores the lives of many of the people buried here. [www.offchurchhistorybook.co.uk/the-author/](http://www.offchurchhistorybook.co.uk/the-author/)

The church has services every week and is used for some other events. In particular it is used for two weeks every summer by five artists as part of the Warwickshire Open Studios event. If this coincides with a village event we can have as many as 800 people through the doors. The Church is open 7am – 7pm and we are listed as part of the Heritage Open Days and the Ride and Stride. Occasional concerts and other events are also held in the church.

**St Margaret's, Hunningham** Originally 12th century, with a Victorian north aisle which has been converted into the "Parish Room" - there being no other meeting place in the village. This room can still be used if we have a large attendance at any service, having a glass wall between nave and room with a sound system and hearing loop covering both the church and room. Just off the vestry there is a toilet and small kitchen suitable for providing tea and coffee.

The building itself has been fairly well maintained over the years - but with sandstone there is always something to do! Due to the location of the Parish Room visitors have to walk through the church - and we feel this is a very positive factor. The Parish Room is used weekly by our Pilgrim Puppets for their rehearsals, and also by a local art group. The room is also used for our Village Parties, Safari Suppers, as a café for our Open Gardens when the church is also in use for an Art Exhibition, and other village events. Deanery meetings are often held here, and meetings of the Feldon Group. It is also used for "Quiet Day" by visiting churches.

A Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in 2023. This revealed the expected list of minor repairs and repointing to the soft lead sandstone. However the Architect was concerned about the repair of the Bell Tower where horizontal lapped weather-boarding was rotting. The Tower was scaffolded to achieve close inspection and when old softwood boarding was removed it revealed that the whole Medieval Structure was in danger of collapse. Following advice from our Structural Engineer a detailed Schedule of replacement in oak was completed by March 2024

The "Friends of St Margarets" were able to fund the total cost approaching £40,000.

The church yard is kept mowed by a local contractor. In it there are several yew trees. The ones at the side of the path were cut down a few years ago with new growth being kept to about 5 feet.

**St Michael's, Weston-under-Wetherley** The church building dates back to the 12th Century, is built in red Warwickshire sandstone, and is the only Grade 1 Listed Building in the Deanery. Keeping this beautiful building in good repair is a constant challenge. We received a Quinquennial Report in 2023 detailing a range of repairs. The lead roof on the North Aisle was stolen in September 2021 and although a Faculty was obtained to replace this with stainless steel it has not been possible to fulfil this at an estimated cost of £145000. In the meanwhile this roof has been felted and is not leaking.

All of the other repairs detailed in the Quinquennial are currently being carried out and are funded by "The Friends of St Michael" deposit account. We are fortunate that this Fund is well supported within the village.

We have a flush WC, wash handbasin and a small kitchen in the Vestry with Trench Arch drainage. The Church is used for a variety of other Village activities. We have an Annotated Plan of all gravestones and burials in the Churchyard. We are working with the Weston Conservation Group to plant up areas of the Churchyard with wild flowers. Thanks to an annual grant from the Parish Council our Churchyard is well maintained. There is ample room for further burials and space for cremation memorial stones.

**St John the Baptist, Wappenbury** Although originally dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century the current Grade II\* listed building was "ruthlessly restored" in 1886 when the South Aisle and the Nave were rebuilt, completely reroofed and a south Transept added. There is a tower housing bells but these are too dangerous to ring properly and the tower is rarely accessed - once every 5 years on average!

The church has an open plan feel with the vestry being a partitioned space behind the original organ. No other 'rooms' exist in the space. Constructed mainly from sandstone, this creates a rather gritty feel ('as the building is gradually trying to return to the sea'! - as the architect describes it!). There is a wooden wagon ceiling in the nave and a vaulted ceiling in the chancel. There are large decorative stained glass windows in the east and west walls and there is colour in the other smaller windows.

There are no utilities other than electricity, and heating such a large open space is attempted with space heaters under pews, 4 overhead radiant heaters and various oil filled radiators and fan heaters strategically placed but it is cold in the winter months. Having no toilet facilities means that St John's doesn't lend itself as a venue for activities with young children and, although a good wedding venue, the congregations need to be aware of this lack.

The Chancel rises up to the altar on steps and a slope made a little uneven possibly due to tree roots. The main walkways are decoratively tiled, many coming loose and covered with carpet that is past its prime. The other floors are either woodblock; some recently renewed; or slabbed, with concrete in the vestry following recent successful treatment for dry rot. The altar is adjacent to the wall with a cross and candle sticks fixed to it on a rear shelf so it is not compatible with standing behind it during Holy Communion.

The Quinquennial Report in 2023 listed minor repairs to the roof which have been completed and drew attention to 4 dangerous trees in the Churchyard which have now been felled and removed.

### **The Vicarage**

The house is a substantial, old property with a lounge, separate dining room, kitchen, wc and study on the ground floor and bathroom on the first floor with 5 bedrooms.

The grounds are substantial with a large area of lawn. There is a garage and other outbuildings and room on the driveway for 4/5 cars.

*See a selection of photographs of the vicarage on the following page*

**Our churches have committed to embracing the concept of the eco-church** with regard to Churchyards partly being unmown and a new hedge of saplings planted at Hunningham. Also we have expressed an interest in the Coventry Diocese Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



**The Vicarage,  
Hunningham**



## Appendix 2 The Offchurch Group Financial Summary

Attached is a simplified summary of TOG's income and expenditure for the 12 months ending 31 December 2023.

More detailed accounts, in which income and expenditure are recorded in more detail, are also kept, which enables us to understand and manage TOG's finances and report them in the detail required by the Diocese.

TOG's income and expenditure are recorded and managed under around 25 different sub-accounts, which fall into three main categories, as follows.

**'Unrestricted'** income and expenditure. This income is used to cover TOG's operating costs and therefore determines whether TOG is financially 'solvent'.

**'Restricted'** income and expenditure. This income can only be used for the purposes specified by the donor.

**'Pass-through'** income and expenditure. This is income that simply passes in full through TOG's bank account to third parties.

Total income in 2023 was £65,713 (2022: £67,958), which included accrued income of £12,094 in respect of the Gift Aid claim for 2023 that was paid by HMRC after 31 December 2023 and collections made in December 2023 that were not paid into the bank account until January 2024. Total expenditure was £64,275 (2022: £64,308), which left a surplus of £1,438 (2022: surplus of £3,650). TOG's Nat West account balance at 31 December 2023 reduced to £39,969 (2022: £49,263), which reflected the net effect of the 2022 and 2023 year-end accruals and the 2023 surplus.

Unrestricted income and expenditure were £37,984 (2022: £36,753) and £41,048 (2022: £42,079), respectively, leaving a deficit of £3,064 (2022: deficit of £5,326) and a corresponding reduction in the unrestricted closing balance to £33,974 (2022: £37,038).

Restricted income was £12,566 (2022: £12,383) and restricted expenditure was £7,419 (2022: £5,809), leaving a net surplus of £5,147 (2022: £6,574). No accrual was made for restricted expenditure, because opportunities to use this income for the purposes specified by its donors had not been identified by the year end.

Pass-through income was £15,163 (2022: £18,822) and pass-through expenditure was £15,808 (2022: £16,420), leaving a net deficit of £645. Expenditure in 2023 exceeded income, because some income received in December 2022 was not paid out until 2023, a situation that was not repeated across the 2023/24 year-end.

As noted in the attached summary, TOG has cash or cash-equivalent assets totalling some £62,336.

## The Offchurch Group 2023 account summary

	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Nat West opening balance at	01.01.23			49263.16	01.01.22			46974.28
Accrual				1360.92				
	2023 Income				2022 Income			
UNRESTRICTED opening balance			37038.00				42363.95	
Standing orders	20462.00				22157.00			
Collections inc envelopes	2037.79				2557.40			
Tax refund from HMRC exc restricted	7342.21				7140.96			
Donations & bequests	1857.36				2589.74			
Weddings/funerals fees	3665.00				1821.00			
Young people	78.30				48.40			
Other <sup>(1)</sup>	2541.69				438.79			
UNRESTRICTED total Income	37984.35				36753.29			
	2023 Expenditure				2022 Expenditure			
Parish share		33255.00				32201.00		
Parish Expenses		329.30				693.27		
Giving to charities etc		640.00				1852.86		
Utilities & insurance & EE		2043.26				1250.61		
Organ, bells, boilers, fire extinguishers		858.55				1265.62		
Youth & Messy church		296.97				762.39		
Church events & hall		222.88				588.95		
Other <sup>(2)</sup>		3402.13				3464.54		
UNRESTRICTED total expenditure		41048.09				42079.24		
UNRESTRICTED surplus/(deficit)			(3063.74)				(5325.95)	
UNRESTRICTED closing balance			33974.26				37038.00	
RESTRICTED opening balance			11184.12				4610.33	

Appeals income	2926.25				2049.31			
Other Restricted income	9639.86				10333.43			
Appeals expenditure		3931.45				820.00		
Other Restricted expenditure		3487.60				4988.95		
RESTRICTED surplus/(deficit)			5147.06				6573.79	
RESTRICTED closing balance			16331.18				11184.12	
PASS THROUGH opening balance			2401.96				0.00	
PASS THROUGH income	15163.14				18822.41			
PASS THROUGH expenditure		15808.04				16420.45		
PASS THROUGH surplus/(deficit)			(644.90)				2401.96	
PASS THROUGH closing balance			1757.06				2401.96	
TOG TOTAL INCOME	65713.60				67958.44			
TOG TOTAL EXPENDITURE		64275.18				64308.64		
TOTAL TOG surplus / (deficit)				1438.42				3649.80
Accrued income <sup>(3)</sup>				(12093.53)				(1360.92)
Nat West closing balance at	31.12.23			39968.97	31.12.22			49263.16

#### Notes

1 'Other<sup>(1)</sup>' for 2023 includes Jaguar drivers donation (£1000)

2 'Other<sup>(2)</sup>' for 2023 includes admin + running costs (£2200), printing (£100)

3 'Accrued income<sup>(3)</sup>' includes HMRC tax refund (£11197.43), Nov & Dec collections (£896.10)

<b>Cash or cash equivalent ASSETS</b>								
Nat West account								39968.97
CCLA								18663.46
Debtors (from Sunday School & Friends)								3490.58
Watsons								212.84
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>								<b>62335.85</b>

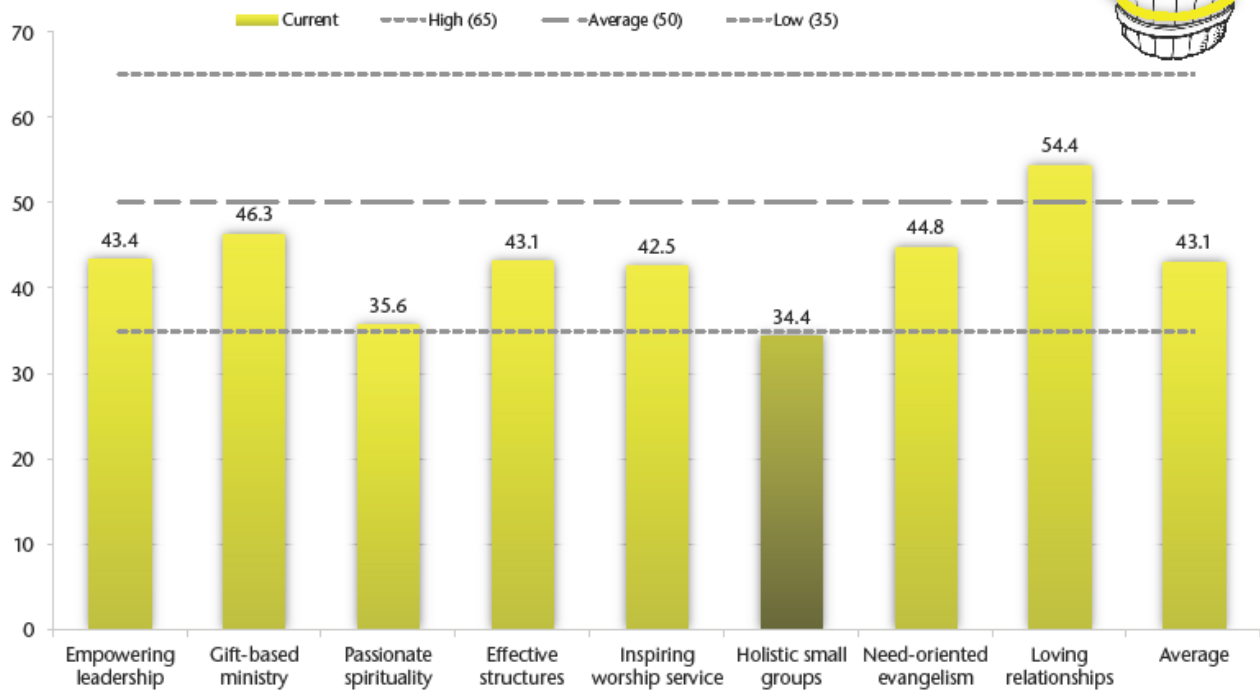
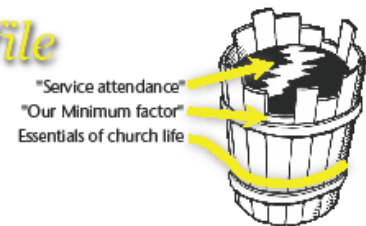
## Appendix 3 The Natural Church Development Survey



### Natural Church Development *profile* of

**SM0701 - Offchurch Group**

July-2019



## Appendix 4 Snapshot of forthcoming services (3 months)

Frequency	Church	Time	Service Type
1 <sup>st</sup>	St Margaret's	11am	Come to Worship
2 <sup>nd</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Songs of Praise
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Michael's	6pm	Evensong
4 <sup>th</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion
1 <sup>st</sup>	St Margarets'	11am	Summer Praise
2 <sup>nd</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Offchurch Village Hall	11am	Pet Service
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Michael's	6pm	Evensong
4 <sup>th</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion
1 <sup>st</sup>	St Margaret's	11am	Come to Worship
2 <sup>nd</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Sunday Worship
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Michael's	6pm	Evensong
4 <sup>th</sup>	St Gregory's	10am	Holy Communion/Harvest
5 <sup>th</sup>	St John's	11am	Harvest

## Appendix 5 Young People and Puppets

Those who attend our monthly Come 2 Worship services witness the continual spiritual journey of our young people. They have recently taken over the leading of the service completely with their enthusiastic involvement, supported by the TOG congregation.

Moreover, our young people have continued to be involved in taking the Pilgrim Puppets into care homes, schools and to other events, sharing God's love through entertainment, with song and humour.

**The Puppet group** faces challenges in terms of the turnover of members since children as they grow older find that clashes with school work and extra-curricular commitments mean that they can no longer commit to the group – however we gain others.

Our adult group continues to go into care homes and schools once a month.

One of our young members has performed with the Academy, organised by One Way Puppets which includes some of the best Christian puppeteers in the country. He performed at EQUIP (the European Puppet Festival) and gave an amazing performance. The Pilgrim Puppets also took the team to EQUIP for three days with the support of TOG and the OCC; we entered the SONG competition and, in a very high standard of competition, came 3<sup>rd</sup>!

**Puppets and Pancakes** are held regularly at Hunningham and attract a large attendance of typically 30+ adults and approximately 20 children, mostly non church-goers.

The **CRIB service** at Weston was one of the best attended with over 100 adults and children, again mostly non church-goers.

Earlier this year we conducted a **survey of our young people** and feel it would be illustrative to reproduce the questions and answers here – we think this reflects a highly positive view of how reflective our young people are in terms of their spiritual needs and the challenges they face – as well as potential solutions and what they look for in their leaders.

What is the BEST thing about our Come 2 Worship service?

**We design it; we are in charge; it is realistic for our Young People**

Do you like taking part? If so – WHY?

**YES! It gets us out of bed!**

**It helps some of us to realise where we are in our own beliefs**

Do you realise that Hunningham Church is part of the OFFCHURCH GROUP which includes Offchurch, Weston and Wappenbury?

**Yes; No; Sort of**

We are looking for a New Vicar for The Offchurch Group. What do you think the New Vicar should be interested in / do?

**Interested in the NEXT generation - US!**

Would you like Him / Her to make any changes to the services we have?

- **Nothing too big; no change; leave young people in charge of the Come 2 Worship Service**

Would you be interested in coming to any other services in The Offchurch Group?

Other commitments prevent us

Are there any changes you would make to these other services that might interest you in coming?

Yes, but unsure

What sort of person would you like the new Vicar to be?

Someone who cares and is positive; Someone who can put the message across in a story-like way. Inclusive for everyone

What is VERY IMPORTANT for us to look for in our New Vicar?

To have a strong Faith!

Is there anything in our “general worship” that you think we should change?

Young people do not attend “general worship”

Are there any changes we could do to our services that might help you “bring a friend” along?

Mitigating circumstances - eg distance to travel

Is it important that the service is NOT TOO LONG? What is the IDEAL length of a service?

MAXIMUM of an HOUR or LESS!

Is there anything else that a Vicar could “introduce” which might make you interested in coming to something other than a service?

Have good energy!

Vicar to do “Challenges” set by Young People

Any ideas that we could do to attract Families with young children to our services?

Have a Sunday School in the Parish Room at Hunningham during C2W.

With interactive Toys and Sensory play.

## FURTHER DETAILS

Informal conversations very welcome with Archdeacon Missioner, Ven Barry Dugmore, on 07487 578311 ([Barry.Dugmore@Coventry.Anglican.org](mailto:Barry.Dugmore@Coventry.Anglican.org) )

Closing date for applications: 12 noon Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Interviews: 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> April

Please send completed application forms to Debbie Niblett (HR Officer and Archdeacons' Administrator): [Debbie.Niblett@Coventry.Anglican.org](mailto:Debbie.Niblett@Coventry.Anglican.org)

For further information about the post please visit the Diocesan Website:

[Clergy Vacancies - Diocese of Coventry](#)

An enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post