

# Welcome

to the Parishes of

Bradfield  
Bucklebury  
and  
Stanford Dingley

Three Parishes  
in Rural  
West Berkshire



## **Bishop's / Archdeacon's Address**

This is a rare opportunity to be in at the start of a new way of doing ministry in three beautiful, well resourced, historic parishes in the heart of West Berkshire.

Following a long period of suspension, during which time the parishes worked closely together, building strong relationships, a plan has emerged to formalise the way the parishes work on the ground by creating a Team ministry, uniting the two benefices formally.

We are currently working through a Pastoral Scheme which, we hope, will lead to the formation of a Team Ministry.

We are seeking to appoint an incumbent for the two benefices who will walk with us through this process and then help us form the new Team and launch us into a new collaborative, flourishing future.

We are looking for someone with good leadership skills, a heart for ministry and a passion for the gospel to come alongside these energetic and faithful congregations at this exciting time.

**Reverend Canon Liz Jackson**  
**Associate Archdeacon Berkshire**

## **Area Dean's Address**

Bradfield Deanery sits between two deaneries with well-known town names and large populations – Reading and Newbury – yet is itself comprised of parishes that are largely rural in nature and some in urban shadow. This brings opportunity, privilege and challenge.

The deanery's mission plan *Connect and Resource* has at its heart the desire for all our churches to become confident worshipping communities; to connect people with God wherever they may be; and together make a difference in the world.

Anyone with a clear missional heart, creativity to reach out to the community, and courage to try new things, is likely to feel at home in Bradfield Deanery.

**Reverend Dr David Archer**  
**Bradfield Area Dean**

# The Benefices of Bradfield and Stanford Dingley; and Bucklebury

*A beautiful place to journey in ministry*

We are a group of three rural parishes, situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty in West Berkshire, midway between Reading and Newbury. We have strong links with our two local Church of England Primary Schools as well as informal links with local Independent Schools and community organisations. As part of God's family in this area, we seek to honour God and his creation, and share his love with the people around us.

For the last 20 years, our three parishes, which are part of two benefices, have worked together as an informal team under a single Priest in Charge. We are seeking to restructure the way we work and are currently developing a Pastoral Scheme that we hope will result in the formation of a Team Ministry, with a Team Rector. Once the Team is established, we also intend to appoint a House for Duty Vicar, to share in the leadership of our benefice. In addition, we have an Associate Priest, Revd Lyn Bliss, and an LLM, Julia Hunt, as well as others who are licensed to preach.

## **Mrs Julia Hunt** **Licensed Lay Minister**

I live in Chapel Row with my husband John. We have three married children and are blessed with six grandchildren. I have worshipped at St Denys' for over twenty-two years, which is a short time compared to others. The congregation were very supportive of me as I went through my training to be a licensed lay minister. I was licensed in 2019.

I enjoy walking with my dog and gardening. I love meeting people on walks and at the various clubs I belong to in the community.

I trained as a primary school teacher and ended my teaching career having taught ages from two and a half to eighty one!



## **Revd Lyn Bliss** **Associate Priest**

Brought up in Dorset, I have been married to Simon since 1974 and we have three adult children and two lovely grandchildren. I was ordained in 2009 and have enjoyed serving in Bucklebury, Bradfield and Stanford Dingley ever since. In 2019, I retired from working in a local Comprehensive School where I taught children with physical disabilities.

JULIA AND LYN

# Welcome to the Benefices

## Our Churches:

Take a drone tour across the parishes

### St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury

- Traditional including weekly 8am BCP Eucharist
- Newly introduced Family Services
- Grade 1 Listed dating back to the 11th century
- Village hall nearby
- [Video Tour](#)

### St Denys', Stanford Dingley

- Small village population: 200
- Traditional services with monthly BCP
- Grade 1 Listed pre-Norman building
- [Video Tour](#)

### St Mary, Marlston

- 13<sup>th</sup> century grade 2 Listed building
- Traditional services
- Used mainly by the local school

### St Peter's, Bradfield Southend

- Contemporary worship services
- 1965 Colt building, with portacabin extensions
- Preschool run daily in church
- CofE Primary School, village hall and shop
- [Video Tour](#)

### All Saints', Upper Bucklebury

- Contemporary worship services
- 1988 brick building, earlier lounge area
- Church office based here
- CofE Primary School, village hall and shop
- [Video Tour](#)

Approx. 6.5 Miles

## Strengths and Opportunities

### Strengths

- Lay Ministry
- Children's services
- Coffee Mornings
- Afternoon Teas
- Active in the community
- Positive links with schools
- Supporting Ukrainians
- Links with Methodists
- Toddler Group and Pre-school

### Opportunities

- Make use of open spaces and the variety of environments
- Make more use of current ministries
- Actively encourage discipleship
- Improve communication between parishes
- Meet together more often
- Make the most of contacts coming to us for Life Events



## Our Vision

As a group of churches, we have identified some priorities for the near future:

### **1 Engage better with each other**

Living out the idea that we belong to each other in Christ (Rom 12), also drawing on John 13 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Recognising that we are at the beginning of a new chapter hoping to become a single benefice, and that there is room for this new benefice to encourage and support each other across the churches in shared mission and vision, adapted as appropriate to each church and its local community.

### **2 Engage better with the local community**

Desiring to be more outward looking, a church without walls, to be salt and light to our neighbours. Whether modern or ancient, our buildings should not limit who we are as the family of God.

### **3 Value our diversity of worship and identity**

Valuing the differences in the styles of worship, as three congregations enjoy traditional worship and two appreciate a contemporary style. Within all traditions we want to try new things, be imaginative and creative.

### **4 Be accessible to all ages**

Developing the team ministry, in particular with work for young people and families, alongside ministry to older people. We want to be a church for all in the widest possible sense.

### **5 Make the most of contact with people who God is sending to us**

Recognising that God is still sending people to our churches for baptisms, weddings and funerals. We would like to invest more in building really good relationships and implementing good communication and administrative systems.

# The New Incumbent

## The Person

Each of our parishes is committed to working together as a benefice whilst maintaining our own individuality. As rural benefices, we are looking for an Incumbent who will help us make God's love known to our respective communities.

We look forward to an Incumbent who is:

- Flexible and relaxed about diverse styles of worship, valuing them all for what they bring to God's work
- A person with a strong discipline of prayer, study and spiritual development
- Empowering others by generously giving authority and responsibility whilst gently retaining accountability
- Willing to be vulnerable and take risks
- A creative thinker and leader, ready to bring fresh energy to parish teams
- A good communicator and a good listener
- Understanding of how people come to Christ by different routes and how their faith may reflect this
- A generous leader who is willing to build trust and capability across the proposed team and the wider congregation
- A keen interest in rural multi-parish ministry, with a love of the countryside



## The Role

We look forward to welcoming an Incumbent who will:

- Oversee our becoming a new benefice, developing our collaboration, administration and stewardship
- Maintain and grow community links. Be approachable and seen in the local community where our neighbours meet – schools, village halls, sports clubs, pubs for example
- Be actively involved in both primary schools and the pre-school and keen to develop the ministry to children and young people
- Encourage and develop lay ministries including preaching, service leading and pastoral care
- Be involved in the recruitment and deployment of a House for Duty Team Vicar
- Have a creative approach to services, encouraging innovation whilst being mindful of the good already happening
- Build us up as enthusiastic and outward looking disciples, confident in engaging with God's mission
- Be a generous leader who is willing to build trust and capability across the proposed Team and the wider congregation
- Commit to developing their own learning, wellbeing and spirituality





## Our Commitment to You

We recognise the challenge of ministering to the needs of our rural church communities across the three parishes and will offer all possible support in seeking a good work/life balance.

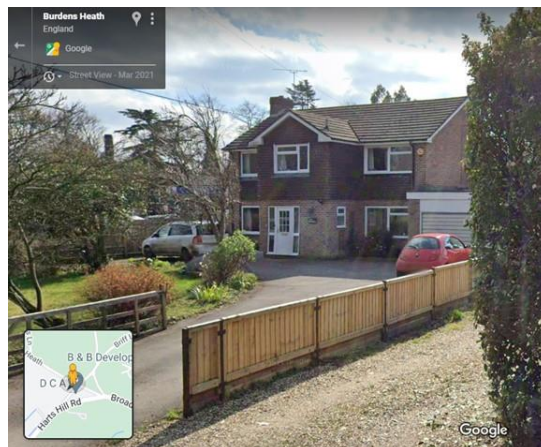
We will provide:

- Loving, prayerful and practical support from willing church communities
- The support of the clergy, lay ministers and leaders
- The support of dedicated people who run a variety of activities throughout the parishes
- An annual hospitality budget

## The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a four bedroomed detached house situated in Upper Bucklebury fairly close to All Saints' Church. This family home has spacious accommodation including a study, utility room and a double garage. There are good sized gardens to both the front and rear of the property with ample parking on the driveway. The Vicarage already benefits from solar panels across the entire rear roof but further works are planned to make this a more energy efficient home through an eco-refit.

The property for House for Duty is located in Bradfield Southend.



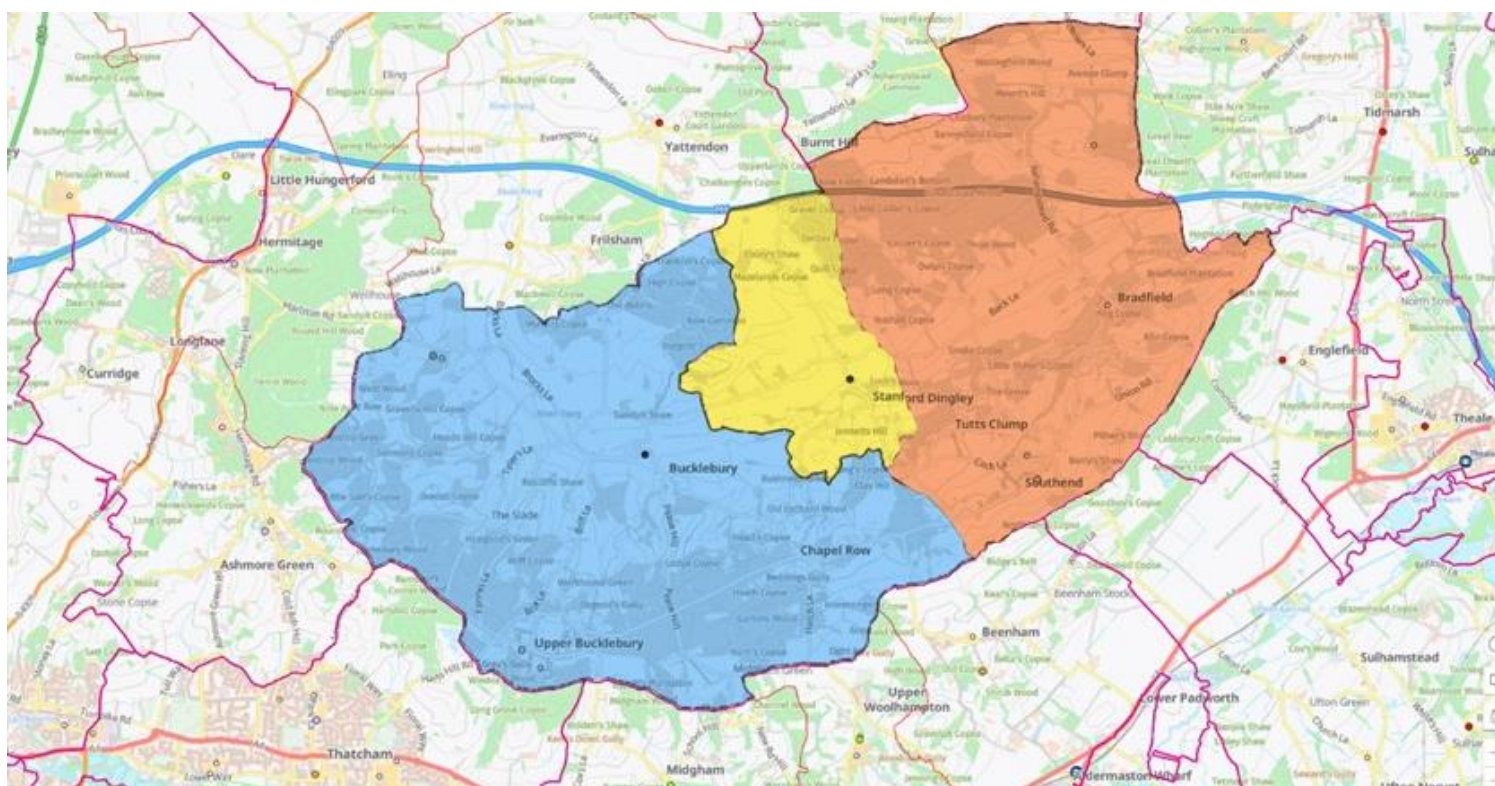
## Detailed Description of the Benefices

### Location:

The rural parishes of Bradfield, Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley are situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Royal County of Berkshire, roughly midway between Reading and Newbury and largely between the M4 and the A4. The River Pang, a tributary of the Thames, flows through the three parishes linking the villages of Bucklebury, Stanford Dingley and Bradfield, whilst the ridge to the south links the villages of Upper Bucklebury, Chapel Row and Bradfield Southend. Much of the area comprises farms, woodland and common.

The population of the three parishes totals around 5,000 with a wide social mix, evenly spread across the age groups, although few from ethnic minority groups. There are extremes of wealth and status locally.

Parish boundaries for Bucklebury, Stanford Dingley and Bradfield:



Approx. 6.5 Miles

## Education:

Both Bradfield and Bucklebury have Church of England Primary Schools. There is a pre-school in St Peter's Church, Bradfield. Secondary schools are in Thatcham and Theale. There are also various private schools, in particular Bradfield College.

## Housing:

Includes everything from Housing Association properties to large country estates, the majority of properties being owner-occupied.

## Transport:

A car is essential, as are wellies! There is easy road access to the M4 at junctions 12 and 13, and to the A4 and A34. There is a local bus service but this is limited. Regular train services are easily accessible from Thatcham, Aldermaston, Midgham and Theale on the Newbury/Reading line and from Pangbourne on the Oxford/Reading line. From Reading, it is less than 30 minutes by fast train to London.

## Local Services:

<b>Shops</b>	Community Shop and Post Office in Bradfield; Local Shop in Bucklebury; Outreach Post Office on Mondays at All Saints' Church; Large Supermarkets near M4 J12 and in Newbury; A range of small shops in Thatcham and Theale. Large Shopping Centres in both Newbury and Reading.
<b>Cafes</b>	Chapel Row and Pop ups in local churches and village hall.
<b>Pubs</b>	Bradfield Southend, Chapel Row, Stanford Dingley and Upper Bucklebury
<b>Doctors' Surgeries</b>	Chapel Row, Thatcham and Theale
<b>Village Halls</b>	Bradfield Southend, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley



# St Peter's Church, Bradfield Southend

- The worship centre at St Peter's was built in 1967 to serve families locally and now oversees a pre-school which runs daily, a weekly lunch club and toddler group as well as Rainbows and Brownies.
- The regular congregation is about 30 resourceful people
- Services are informal and mainly lay led with contemporary worship group.
- There are a couple of weekly home groups and a Zoom prayer meeting weekly for the combined parishes.
- There is a very popular quarterly afternoon tea hosted for the community.
- The church has good relationships with local schools.
- There is a community shop, a well-run village hall, a pub and many groups in the village which all helps to build relationships.
- The parish is responsible for the graveyard surrounding the original 13th Century parish church – now in ownership of Bradfield College, as well as the graveyard in Buckhold.
- Many of those involved with the church have been in Bradfield a long time and are fully engaged in one way or another in the community.
- The church produces the monthly Parish Magazine covering Bradfield and Stanford Dingley going to over 900 homes. It is also distributed to local amenities.
- The church regularly supports Tearfund, Barnabas Fund and a missionary in Ecuador through CMS.
- Most of the congregation have regularly attended New Wine or Keswick.
- [Click here](#) to take a tour of St Peter's.





## All Saints' Church, Upper Bucklebury

- Congregation small but Spirit-filled and committed to living for Jesus
- Contemporary worship supported by live band
- Community minded – Post Office and coffee morning currently but we want to restart Messy Church and other more social activities
- Flexible and varied liturgy made possible by AV (tech, not Bible version!)
- Disability friendly
- [Click here](#) for a tour of the building
- [Click here](#) for a message from the head of our local primary school





## St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury Village

- Picturesque Anglican Church with a history of 1,000+ years of worship
- A committed congregation at the heart of the village, who undertake the readings, lead intercessions and give generously
- Supported by volunteers who ring the bells, arrange flowers, play the organ, operate the live-stream and provide refreshments after services
- Weekly 8:00am BCP Holy Communion and 9:30am Morning Prayer; and monthly children's service
- Increasing fundraising activities - coffee mornings, cake sales, garden openings – for the church and other charities
- Grade 1 listed building, well financed and maintained, with flexible space and modern heating
- A strong musical tradition
- A popular venue for weddings, christenings, funerals and thanksgiving services
- [Click here](#) for a tour of the building





## St Mary, Marlston

- 12<sup>th</sup> Century Norman Church serving the hamlet of Marlston
- Monthly 8am BCP services
- Occasional weddings and funerals
- Strong support and use by neighbouring Brockhurst School who hold regular services
- A small but loyal congregation
- A Grade 1 listed building. Financially sound





## St Denys' Church, Stanford Dingley

- St Denys' has a gathered congregation from the surrounding area
- The village of Stanford Dingley support major services and help with the maintenance of the churchyard.
- Services vary using Common Worship, Book of Common Prayer for Morning Prayer and Evensong in the summer and a monthly family service
- We hold outdoor services on occasions, all year round supported by using a portable sound system.
- Snowdrop Saturday in February
- St Denys' has a close relationship with the local Methodist Church, sharing services every 5th Sunday
- An extensive reordering has resulted in a vestry kitchen, new heating system and a more flexible space. There is a baby changing facility and an accessible loo.
- Finances are sound.
- Share primary school with Bradfield
- [Click here](#) for a tour of building.





## Schools and Pre-school

### St Peter's Pre-school

Our pre-school is situated in the middle of the village of Bradfield Southend, at the rear of St Peter's Church and a five-minute walk to the Bradfield C of E Primary School. It was opened over forty years ago by members of the local church who wanted to offer affordable pre-school education and a suitable setting for children to socialise. It is currently run by a voluntary management committee with three representatives from the Parochial Church Council, with the remaining members being parents.

The setting, being behind the church, backs on to fields and provides Early Years education in such a beautiful rural setting. When potential new families come to view the pre-school, we always point out how fortunate we are to have access to a garden and a field which is maintained on our behalf by the PCC. Although all faiths are welcome at St. Peter's we have a general Christian Ethos. We have regular visits from our local Lay Minister, we enjoy visits to Rushall farm to celebrate Easter, we perform a nativity production each Christmas and end all sessions with a group prayer.

The PCC are an integral part of the life of the pre-school. They contribute toward maintaining good standards of service to our families, support the staffing group and provide a well-maintained environment for us to provide our service.

We have a strong relationship with the Church and we are truly grateful for their continual support.



## Primary Schools

There are Church of England Schools in both Bradfield and Bucklebury that are well linked with the churches within their parish. Regular worship assemblies are supported by the ministry team across the benefices.

### Bradfield CE (VA) Primary School



Bradfield CE Primary School is situated in Bradfield Southend, a short distance away from St Peter's Church. They have recently appointed a new headteacher, Miss Jessica Davies. Bradfield Primary School has had a close and fruitful relationship with the local church. Many staff members have been parishioners and the school has benefited from fortnightly visits from the priest in charge, who is traditionally a member of the school governing board. The previous incumbent led lessons in RE in particular focusing on the sacraments. During the interregnum the relationships with schools have been maintained with members of the team continuing to lead worship assemblies and seasonal services.

Bradfield and Stanford Dingley Churches have been kind enough to provide Bibles for our children as leavers gifts and more latterly to our children entering KS2 as an aid to study. We are hopeful that the new incumbent will be keen to develop close links with the school in order to give our children an understanding of how faith can be lived.

### Bucklebury CE (VC) Primary School

Bucklebury CE Primary School is situated in Upper Bucklebury, a short walk away from All Saints' Church. Hear from headteacher, Mr Andy Higgs, about the school's links with the local church.



[Click here](#) to hear from the Headteacher

## Other Schools within the Parishes

### Bradfield College

The benefice has longstanding links with Bradfield College, a leading co-educational boarding school (13-18), which is within the parish of Bradfield. The College was founded in 1850 by the Rector of Bradfield, The Revd Thomas Stevens. Currently, Bradfield has a chaplain and assistant chaplain, who works part time at the college and part time in the parish of Theale. The present chaplain, and predecessors, officiate at Sunday services and occasional offices within the benefice. Past incumbents have been invited to preach at the college chapel.



There are excellent links between the College and the local community. A community prayer group meets about twice a year in the College Chapel. On Remembrance Sunday many from the local community attend the College Chapel and a ceremony in St Andrew's churchyard. There is a community remembrance service and tea held at the war memorial in Bradfield. The College takes care of St Andrew's Churchyard. Over the past few years, the College has hosted lectures, plays and concerts which have been attended by many from the local community. The College has partnerships with several of the local primary schools. The former parish church of St Andrew Bradfield has recently been closed and purchased by the College, and is in the process of being transformed into a teaching and learning centre.

### St Andrew's Preparatory School

St Andrew's School is part of The Bradfield Group with Bradfield College and sits on the Bradfield Parish boundary.

### Brockhurst and Marlston House School

Brockhurst and Marlston House School is within Bucklebury parish in the village of Marlston next to St Mary, Marlston. The school uses the church as their chapel for their services.

### Local Secondary Schools

Theale Green School in Theale Village, Kennet School in Thatcham and The Downs School in Compton.

## Organisation and Finance

### Three PCCs

- Bucklebury – responsible for All Saints’ and St Mary’s Bucklebury
- Bradfield – responsible for St Peter’s and for St Andrew’s churchyard.
- Stanford Dingley – responsible for St Denys’

<b>Parish Numbers 2022</b>	<b>Bucklebury with Marlston</b>	<b>Bradfield</b>	<b>Stanford Dingley</b>	<b>Total</b>
Christmas	278	30	155	463
Easter	135	26	65	226
<b>October average</b>				
Church adults	47	21	19	87
Church children	12	4	1	17
<b>Worshipping Community</b>				
0-17	3	4	0	7
18-69	33	20	13	66
70+	29	13	30	72
Joiners	2	4	10	16
Leavers	2	0	4	6
<b>Life Events</b>				
Baptisms	6	0	1	7
Marriages	4	0	2	6
Funerals	6	3	3	12

## Finance

Parish Accounts 2021	Bucklebury with Marlston	Bradfield	Stanford Dingley	Total
<b>Income</b>				
Collections & Pledges	£43,696	£19,519	£20,424	£83,639
Gift Aid Recovered	£12,567	£4,127	£3,796	£20,490
Other	£33,054	£9,845	£5,297	£48,196
<b>Total</b>	<b>£89,317</b>	<b>£33,491</b>	<b>£30,517</b>	<b>£153,325</b>
<b>Outgoings</b>				
Parish Share*	£37,585	£25,080	£16,719	£79,384
To Benefice Office	£0**	£5,991	£2,349	£8,340
Charitable Donations	£5,191	£3,322	£1,420	£9,933
Utilities and Expenses	£10,594	£12,283	£4,972	£27,849
Other	£37,363	£8,173	£5,109	£50,645
<b>Total</b>	<b>£90,734</b>	<b>£58,849</b>	<b>£30,569</b>	<b>£180,152</b>
<b>Reserves (Balance Sheet)</b>				
Restricted	£132,026	£2,217	£174,288	£308,531
Unrestricted	£16,414	£22,562	£110,506	£149,482
Designated	£61,901	£201,274		£263,175

\*Parish share paid in full

\*\*The office is located in Bucklebury Parish with the other parishes contributing to expenses.

## Link Index

[Drone Tour of Parishes](#)

[Bucklebury CE Primary Headteacher](#)

### Church Tours:

[St Peter's Church, Bradfield Southend](#)

[All Saints' Church, Upper Bucklebury](#)

[St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury](#)

[St Denys' Church, Stanford Dingley](#)