

The Benefice of St Thomas Sutton, Holy Trinity Cowling and Christ Church Lothersdale



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St Thomas Sutton, Holy Trinity Cowling and Christ Church Lothersdale

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Introduction to the benefice

As part of the Benefice of Sutton with Cowling and Lothersdale, we work together as a group whilst still keeping the identities of three separate village churches. Our parishes are different, geographically: one in the valley, close to several major transport routes, one at the top of a hill, with constant traffic passing through, and one in a somewhat remote valley, approached by steep hills up and down.

We have joint PCC meetings, then break out into separate groups to discuss matters pertaining to just our own parishes. This was started during the pandemic, and we find it works well. We all know each other much better for the extra contact!

We are a member of the Crosshills and District Fellowship of Churches and work with the other churches on various events. We have a representative on the South Craven and Wharfedale Deanery Synod.

When there is no communion service in our own parish, we travel to each other's services to join in their worship and benefit greatly from this.

We have had both male and female priests in this Benefice, and are happy to work with either.



The Team

The Bishop's Statement

Incumbent

St Thomas Sutton, Holy Trinity Cowling and Christ Church Lothersdale Bishop's Statement

Our vision in the Diocese of Leeds is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. In appointing to every post, we seek people who have a joyful and confident faith which has inspired a track record of church growth, both numerically and spiritually.

These three parishes are part of a joint benefice of c8,500 people within the Bradford Episcopal Area and the Diocese of Leeds. Each of the three churches is a significant focal point in its local community. As well as the villages of Sutton, Cowling and Lothersdale, the parish also includes Glusburn and part of Crosshills.

Partly as a response to the pandemic, the three churches and their PCCs have been working more closely together. This development needs to continue, with scarce time, gifts and energy (both the vicar's and also lay leaders') being deployed more effectively across the benefice. There is a welcome realism that new patterns of worship and mission are needed to reach out to the generations and communities missing from the churches. Continuing down this road will inevitably mean some hard decisions for the PCCs about priorities for ministry, not least in when things happen and what not to do, and I hope they will support and encourage each other as they do so.

From the perspective of the Episcopal Area, we see the overarching responsibility of the new vicar as providing clear and enabling leadership, which will foster growth numerically as well as spiritually and in service to their local community. We are therefore looking for a visionary and enabling leader who can work winsomely with the existing congregations and the village communities, lead in outreach to grow new disciples and leaders, planting and developing new appropriate forms of worship and church which meet at accessible times and places. Some good building blocks are in place, such as *Rise and Shine*, *Refresh* and *Open*, as well as good relationships with the schools in each village (in Sutton it is a Church of England VC school) and the stream of opportunities through occasional offices.

We therefore see four particular priorities for the incoming Vicar:

- a) To continue building up confident lay ministry from the congregations, developing pathways for greater discipleship and increased lay leadership, and encouraging individuals to develop in their faith and use their gifts and talents. (S)he will therefore need excellent teaching, team building and team leadership skills.
- b) To work a 'mixed ecology' of new forms of church and worship alongside traditional ones to grow a wider diversity of ages in the congregations. In particular this will involve developing and implementing a sustainable strategy for effective and appropriate ministry and styles of

worship to reach out to people of all ages, including pre-retirement adults, but particularly families, young people and children, and to grow young people as Christians. We expect this will involve building on the good links with the village schools and other key community organisations.

- c) To work with the PCCs to help the churches become ever more deeply connected with their local village communities. We expect that this will involve the Vicar developing active and visible relationships within the villages in creative ways themselves, but particularly in enthusing, enabling and supporting the congregations to play active roles in their communities. The Vicar should be able to engage joyfully and strategically with the life of the communities, contributing with others to a vision for each village and helping the churches find their particular places within them.
- d) To help the three PCCs and church congregations to work ever more closely together, and to explore possible structural changes (such as a joint PCC) which might support this.

The Deanery of South Craven and Wharfedale is comprised of parishes similar to these, many of whom are experimenting with mixing new approaches to worship and mission alongside inherited patterns. The new incumbent will therefore find a group of creative and supportive colleagues in the Deanery chapter, all of whom will be deeply familiar with the joys and challenges that each other faces. The new post holder will therefore be expected to work with a spirit of generosity in sharing wisdom and insights about ministry within the Deanery of South Craven and Wharfedale and across the Episcopal Area.

+Toby Bradford
17 May 2023

1. The main areas of mission to be prioritised are:

- Build on existing links with schools;
- Help build a wider interest in faith and church attendance;
- Help us to reach out to all members of the community;
- Reach out to those who come for baptism, weddings and funerals.

2. The top three challenges for the new priest are:

- Increase the relevance of the church in the villages.
- Retain families' interest after they outgrow our Refresh services.
- Increase the number of those willing to assist in the running of the church to replace those who have moved away during the last few years.

3. The person we are seeking is :

- A person who can adapt to the diverse needs of worship in the three parishes;
- Someone whose Christian values are able to build positive relationships, and through visits and assemblies, become part of the extended families of our schools;
- A person who has the vision to encourage and appeal to all the residents of our parishes;
- A person who is committed to ministry with a passion to grow all three churches, who are each starting from a different point;
- A good team leader;
- A person to further grow the contribution of the laity.

We like to support our vicar in any way we can. We appreciate that it can be a stressful job: a vicar's hours can be long and there is always 'something else waiting to be done'. We have a PCC who understands this and is keen to see our vicar taking holidays and days off where appropriate. We are always ready to support our vicar's learning and development and look forward to sharing the work of the parish with her/him.

In our Benefice we believe that every person is unique, valued and loved; whoever and whatever they are. We believe in being thoroughly inclusive of all people and being a welcoming church that meets people where they are. Our churches exist to serve the whole community and beyond, and to help people discover and experience what it means when it says in the Bible that 'God is love.'

St. Thomas' Sutton-in-Craven.



Our church lies in a beautiful part of the world: rolling hills and moors, deep valleys and tumbling streams abound. Snowdrops grace our churchyard at the beginning of the year, the perfume of lilies fills our church at Easter. In summer the bees laze around the flowers in the churchyard, and in autumn the drifts of leaves herald the winter seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Watch the donkey plod up the path in the park as we perform our annual Outdoor Nativity with our friends from the Baptist church, all worshipping together. Listen to the sound of carols pouring from our church at the Christmas Eve Carol service.....

Watch our small children learn about God's love as they sing and create at our breakfast 'Refresh' service;

See another new member of our congregation received into the church at Baptism;



Watch our friends join in 'Games and Grub' , chatting round a large table, exchanging news and laughter, playing 'Scrabble' or 'Rummikub', telling us if someone is ill or sad, and enjoying the fellowship of sharing a hot meal;

Support a family in the sadness of bereavement.

Share in the joy of a newly married couple leaving our church to start their new life together.

Watch the PCC members debate the issues of the moment as they work together to keep this village church open and ready to serve the parishioners of Sutton-in-Craven;

And join us in our journey to do God's will in this, his church.

About our Parish

The parish of Sutton in Craven is in North Yorkshire on the border with West Yorkshire and only a few miles from Lancashire.

The neighbouring village of Glusburn is part of the parish.

This parish is situated in open countryside with many walks and spectacular views. It lies midway between Keighley and Skipton, known as the "Gateway to the Dales."

The parish of Sutton has a population of around 2719 and is a vibrant community with a range of shops, businesses, village hall, two public houses. Community centre, nursing homes, nearby health centre, pharmacy, and leisure facilities such as the cricket ground, football pitches and park. All these give the village a strong sense of identity. In addition, Glusburn has an Institute which hosts many social activities from exercise classes, through a weekly luncheon club to monthly film nights.





Some of the members of the newly started benefice walking group

Schools

In Sutton there is a small Church of England VC school and a larger county primary school. There is also a community primary school in Glusburn. South Craven Secondary school is within walking distance and there are Grammar Schools in Skipton for which Sutton children can apply. There are local toddler groups for pre-school children and a nursery at Glusburn Primary School.

Transport Links.

Sutton is served by a half hourly bus service to Skipton and Keighley. Steeton and Silsden railway station is two miles away and a train to Leeds or Bradford takes 30 minutes. Another bus service runs through nearby Crosshills taking passengers to Burnley and then on to Manchester.

Employment.

Farming activity remains present in the parish, and a substantial number of people work at nearby Airedale General Hospital.

Housing.

The parish is home to many mature people, many of whom have lived here all their lives, with a mix of middle-aged people and families with younger children. Terraced houses are characteristic of the parish, and there is also a substantial proportion of semi-detached houses and some social/affordable and detached homes. A local mill has been converted into flats in recent years.

Social activities.

There is a range of activities in the parish, including an amateur dramatic society, allotments and Women's Institute to name but a few. We have a Facebook page which is a useful source of information on various activities, local history, organisations, events and village news.

Our Church and its People

We try to have a range of services which appeals to every age of our congregation. For our younger members, there is a 'Refresh' breakfast service once a month which includes breakfast, craft activities, singing, simple prayers and lots of laughter!



Our Holy Communion services are held in St. Thomas' on the first and third Sundays of the month, and when we have no communion service we can travel to Lothersdale on the second Sunday and Cowling on the fourth. If there is a fifth Sunday in the month, we take it in turns to host the service.

We send out "Readings and Reflections" every two months, which gives details of all our services, a newsletter, and readings and service sheets for our dial in services. These are delivered by hand or electronically.

Our Dial-in services, started originally in lock-down, are a Compline service on Tuesday evenings, Morning Prayer on Thursdays, and an Evening Service on Sundays at 4pm.

Community outreach.

A Remembrance Service and an Outdoor Nativity are held in the park each year, where we join with our friends in the Baptist Church and with St. Peter's Methodist Church in Crosshills.

We held craft sessions for local children in the week before Christmas, providing a 'warm space' and free refreshments. These were very well attended and the children had great fun.

A chance for their parents/carers to have some relaxing time, too, over a cup of coffee!

Crafts are offered at other services, too: children recently made Easter Gardens to take home and have previously planted seeds and painted stones, amongst other activities.

Our current vicar visits schools regularly, taking assemblies and welcoming the children into church for services, Nativity Plays and end-of-term celebrations.

We hold a "Games and Grub" session every fortnight, welcoming people into church for companionship, warmth, and a soup-and-roll luncheon. This is well attended, and people tell us they love to come and mix with others and enjoy their friendship. This is also an excellent opportunity to keep a finger on the pulse of the well-being of our friends: if someone is sick or in need of a friendly listening ear, we will become aware of this through Games and Grub.

Occasional Offices for 2022:

Baptisms:	19
Confirmations:	0
Weddings:	2
Funerals:	13
Funerals not in church:	3

The Church and its Buildings.

Our church was built in 1868-9 as a daughter church within the ancient parish of Kildwick. Thomas Bairstow, a local mill owner, left money to build and endow the church. It is surrounded by a voluntary maintained churchyard which is kept in excellent condition by the efforts of a dedicated team of volunteers.

A clock in memory of a previous vicar was set in the tower in 1901 and our organ was anonymously donated.

We were able to contact a descendant of the Bairstow family to join in our recent 150 year celebrations.

We added an extension to the church in 2003 to accommodate modern day facilities of a small kitchen and an accessible toilet, together with a ramp leading to the main door.

Our last Quinquennial inspection was in 2021 and the roof has recently been overhauled and repaired.

St. Thomas' Church stands prominently at the centre of the growing village. The Park, opposite the church, is a strong focal point for the community and is a popular feature of village life with a Bowling Green, football pitch, multi-games area and cafe pavilion.

The Church and its Finance:

St. Thomas' is not a large or wealthy congregation, but we make every effort to pay our share in full. Because of recent roof repairs, we have not been able to pay the full share, but we hope to Increase our payments. Average giving last year was £9 per week (28 people) of which 80% was Gift Aided. GASDS is claimed wherever possible. We also have a facility in place for mobile Phone donations.

The Parish of Holy Trinity, Cowling

Cowling is a village and civil parish in the Craven district of North Yorkshire to the west of Sutton in Craven. Historically part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, it is a village of 2458 residents with a mean age of 38.6 years. The 2011 Census reveals that 96% of the residents were born in the UK and a lower than national average are on benefits. The village is expanding due to new housing. Cowling also includes a community primary school with 140 children. In 2019 it received an Ofsted rating of 'Good' with room for improvement especially with boys education. There is currently a new head teacher, Kate Dawson. This school is so popular families are moving here to secure a place for their children.



The local school is adjacent to the church and strong links have been forged. The school uses the church for their Christmas and leaving services and enjoy regular visits by the vicar to their assemblies. We asked the School Council what they would like from a new vicar. They have said: Kindness, patience, inclusive, enthusiastic, creative, organised, humorous, friendly and passionate.

There is also a local Preschool and toddler group which serves the community



The photograph shows some of the school children visiting the church

There are a number of social venues which include 3 licensed premises that serve a high standard of food. There is also a local Grocery /Newspaper shop, a Hairdressers shop, a take-away, a chip shop, and a new village hall which holds a high level of Community activities in addition to housing a play group and Pre-School.

The historic town of Skipton lies 5 miles to the North West of the village and Keighley is 6 miles to the South. There are good rail links at Cononley, Steeton and Silsden as well as Keighley and Skipton with good connections to Leeds and London. The cities of Bradford, with its lovely cathedral, and Leeds are also within easy reach by road or rail.

The Parish Council of Cowling is currently supporting the growth of allotment spaces due to a high demand, and supports a local Speeding group, in addition to environmental issues and has a good relationship with the local Green Party Councillor and the local Police. Both are regularly invited to attend the once monthly meeting for advice and support. Parts of this semi-rural village are in a Conservation area and the current Parish Council oversee planning applications regularly and have links with the now bigger North Yorkshire Council (previously Craven Council) helping protect and conserve it.

The village is Saxon in origin and is recorded in the *Domesday Book* as 'Collinge'. The name means Coll's people or tribe. At the time of the Norman Conquest the main landowner was Gamel who had very large land holdings in Yorkshire. His name survives in Gamsgill on the northern edge of the village.

Originally the village comprised three separate hamlets namely Ickornshaw, Middleton, Gill and Cowling Hill. It was only following the construction of the main Keighley to Colne road (A6068) and the building of large mills alongside the road that what is now regarded as the main village was constructed providing terraced cottage homes for the mill workers. The older parts of the village faded in importance and as a result the parish church and village school are located on what appears to be the outskirts of the village between Ickornshaw and Middleton, the centre of the village having moved since their construction.

The mills continued to operate and to provide the main source of local employment until the end of the 20th century but are now all closed down and their sites largely redeveloped for housing and the village hall. North Yorkshire produced *Parish Profiles* in 2012 for each of the 14 civil parishes outside the National Park and in the Cowling profile it traces the steady growth of the population over the period just when the six Mills were closing. The 30 shops in 1950 are now reduced to several shops. Of the 80 farmhouses which still exist fewer than 20 are linked to a working farm. The village is now very much a dormitory village for those working in the surrounding towns of West Yorkshire and East Lancashire.- 37% of the working population travel more than 5km to work.

There is a reasonable bus service—apart from late evenings and Sundays. The community comes together for village events such as the Gala and the annual Duck Race.

Holy Trinity church



The church was designed by the local architect, R.D. Chantrell in 1845

The monthly pattern of services is

1st Sunday 8.00am Said Holy Communion (rite2)
2nd Sunday 9.00am Refresh (Children's Service)
3rd Sunday
4th Sunday 10.45am Sung Holy Choral Communion
5th Sunday United Benefice Service on rotation

There are lay lead dial in services

Tuesday – Compline 8.00pm

Thursday – Morning Prayer 10.00am

Sunday – Evening Prayer 4.00pm

We see ourselves in the central part of the Church of England spectrum of worship.

Services 2022	Baptisms	Confirmees	Weddings	Funerals in Church	Funerals in Crematorium
Number	3	0	5	1	1

The church building is in a good state of repair having had a new roof in the last 20 years and new central heating boilers approximately 4 years ago. The churchwardens are very conscientious regarding the upkeep of both the church and the churchyard. The next Quinquennial report is due later this year.

The congregation at Cowling is small for the size of the village but has increased on the 4th Sunday due to the magnificent SATB choir which has gained a reputation for excellence in choral worship. They are led by a professional Music Director who is also the regular organist at the church. We recognise that it is vital that we continue to grow and will work with the new incumbent to do so. The congregation is warm and welcoming and are open to new ideas to help to retain new people coming into the church. The churchwardens, secretary, LLM and other members of the PCC are committed to the church and to the community. Holy Trinity wants to continue to explore the possibilities of baptism/confirmation classes, marriage preparation classes and following up on these contacts. The church continues to play a part in the local community by offering the usual occasional offices.

The Refresh service on the 2nd Sunday of the month is designed for young children/families. They enjoy breakfast, songs, bible stories and crafts. Baptism families are encouraged to attend Refresh prior to the Baptism taking place.

The Christingle Service on Christmas Eve is very well attended by the wider community with very often standing room only. The collection from this service is for The Children's Society. £175 was raised recently.

There are special services throughout the year including:



A very popular Christmas Midnight Service, with Communion and full Choir.

Easter

Remembrance Sunday and Harvest are all well attended.

Weddings were popular last year post Covid. Here's a picture of one of our lovely couples, **Tom & Elise**

During the Christmas holiday an event for children was held in the church with lots of different activities for them to participate in which we hope to make an annual event. The church was also involved in a joint venture with the Village Hall and Parish Council to provide a meal and entertainment which was entitled "The Bit In Between" intended for people who were alone at Christmas. Covid had an impact on the churches ability to hold coffee mornings and Flower Festivals but since 2021 we have begun to hold annual strimming parties, very popular social events and two very successful concerts performed by the choir.



This photo shows the Choir Master (Centre) with the choir members at a recent rehearsal.

A quotation from one of the choir members:-

'Since joining Holy Trinity Church Choir I have had the pleasure of attending monthly services at Cowling. I have always felt very welcomed at the church by everyone in the Parish. We feel very appreciated as a choir and love singing there. The hospitality is very generous both after rehearsals and services, provided by a small dedicated team of parishioners. I normally attend my own Catholic Parish on a Sunday and I initially thought I wouldn't feel like I had attended Mass but, I feel so at home at Holy Trinity with a very similar liturgy and, with the encouragement to receive the Eucharist, I know that I have been to Mass. Of course, we have a hard-working talented organist and conductor, James, who chooses appropriate, uplifting and challenging music which really lifts the service.'

All the present members are good hearted and give generously of their time to look after the church. In a small congregation it is difficult to find all the gifts needed to run the church. There are some very faithful members of Holy Trinity who have worked hard to keep things going especially through the pandemic.

Holy Trinity is a member of the Crosshills District Fellowship of Churches although we do not have a lay representative at present.

We had an agreement with St. Andrew's Methodist church in Cowling in times past where we worshiped together one week in the month alternated between them and Holy Trinity. The association was terminated several years ago due to the dwindling numbers of participants. St. Andrew's Church will close this year.

The two Benefice LLM's (PTO) are available to all three churches and are so used. Other than that there is no shared ministry team.

Cowling PPC agreed that no resolution regarding women priests should be adopted. They would welcome both male and female priests.

At present there are no home communicants following the death of the last home communion on the list. There is no Care Home/Nursing Home in the Parish. In the care homes in the Benefice there are some CDFC lead communion services held.

Christchurch Lothersdale.



The third parish in the united benefice is Lothersdale which lies to the northwest of Sutton. Lothersdale is a steep sided valley, running east-west for approximately 2 miles and situated 5 miles south-west of Skipton. A stream in the bottom of the valley joins a tributary of the river Aire. There are approximately 250 homes in the village lining the bottom of the valley in a ribbon type development, and also dotted about on the surrounding hillsides. It is a relatively affluent village 46% of the houses have 4 or more bedrooms and consequently there are few houses available for young house buyers and there has been little increase in the population in recent years.

The surrounding landscape is dotted with farmsteads clinging to the hillsides. Many of the farmsteads, including Woodhead, T'Oliver and Knott have been converted into groups of three or four houses, some rented, some holiday homes and some in private ownership. There are some old farming families, but increasingly the village has become more of a community of commuters travelling into Skipton, Leeds, Bradford, Colne and even Manchester. The village is a small community with a population of just over 500 people. Local amenities include a park, church, pub, village hall, Clubhouse and primary school (Ofsted 'Outstanding'), fishing lakes with café and bar.



No house in the village is connected to mains gas or water and while mobile broadband connectivity has improved recently there are still some “blind spots”. This lack of utilities has had the effect of limiting the amount of development that has taken place and gives the village an unspoilt atmosphere. It has

also caused conflict for more than 25 years over the ownership rights of water from various springs. Many of the villagers have now invested in bore holes.

The village pub is the Hare and Hounds. It serves hot food and real ales, runs quiz nights and supports various charities. The village hall is a popular venue for parties, concerts, dances and other social events. Last year it and the park provided venues for the Jubilee Celebrations. (The hall is owned by the Church but is rented by a group of trustees paying a “peppercorn rent”). The church is entitled to a limited number of free sessions, some of which are used by a The Luncheon Club – a church initiative where, once a month, a group of us serve a two course meal to anyone of pensionable age who lives, or has connections with the village).



A Safari Supper and Curry evenings are organised by various members of the Community. The Wild About Lothersdale group encourage people to install bird boxes, plant wild flower meadows, have started a tree planting initiative and have made us all more aware of the natural environment of the village.

Lothersdale can claim to have had Charlotte Bronte as an inhabitant, when she worked as a governess at Stone Gappe, and that the mill contains the largest indoor water mill in Europe, and is in the Guinness Book of Records. There is fantastic walking country around it, with the Pennine Way passing close to the church.

Christchurch, Lothersdale

Christchurch sits a quarter of a mile to the east of the village. Standing outside the church one has a view down the valley with the village nestling in the bottom, including a mill chimney from the days when the village produced silks and cottons. Beyond the mill are the village school, the recreation ground and the former Methodist Chapel which closed in 2010 - leaving Christchurch as the only church in the village.

Our Church

It is a beautiful and welcoming church, but at the moment both the PCC and the congregation are small. We have a single Church Warden who is helped with her duties by the PCC secretary, Treasurer and other members of the church. We have two brilliant retired members of the clergy and a former reader but they are all in their 8th decade and need to lighten their commitments. It is the custom of the church for members of the congregation to read the lessons and prepare and lead the intercessions.



The pattern of services at Christchurch

1 st . Sunday	9.00am	Bible Study with Breakfast
2 nd . Sunday	10.45am	Parish Communion for the whole Benefice.
3 rd . Sunday	9.00am	Refresh (All age worship for the whole family)
4 th . Sunday		No worship in Lothersdale at present
5 th Sunday	10.45am	United Benefice Service (every 3 rd one in Lothersdale)

In addition to this there is a dial- in service for the whole Benefice at 4pm on Sundays.

Bible Study is generally attended by between 4 and 8 people, usually aged 50+, a core group of 5/6 from village or on the electoral roll. Parish Communion now involves people from the whole Benefice so the average age of the congregation is younger, but most of the Lothersdale contingent are over 65, attendance at this is about 18.

Refresh is attended by families with children usually of primary age or younger together with most of the people from the Bible study.

The congregation is primarily white, over 65 and female.

There are 20 people on the 2022 electoral roll about a third of them live outside the parish.



We are blessed with a gang of voluntary grass mowers who keep the churchyard looking good. Members of the wild life group maintain bird and hedgehog boxes and a wildflower area.

The Church and the Village

We do our best to keep a high profile in the village. Our Christmas Eve Crib Service is usually attended by 70 or more adults. The last couple of years we have worked with a local brass band to provide a Carol Concert and the same bandmaster has brought his Swing Band to church on other occasions for more lively Christmas music (mulled wine and mince pies at both of these). We have an egg hunt on Easter Day.



For the last 27 years we have held a monthly Luncheon Club (see village section). This is a church initiative which came out of one of our Away Days. Only about one quarter of the diners are members of our church community, whilst all the cooks are.

We have good connections with the village school, the younger children visit regularly helping us get ready for Easter, Harvest, Christmas and at other times, and we get together with the older children once a year for a Fairtrade Coffee Morning.



The church also produces and delivers (personally and electronically) the Parish Magazine and at Christmas every house (including those up long farm tracks) gets a Christmas card from the church with greetings and details of the concerts and services we are planning to hold.

Last year 5 children were baptised in 3 services. Traditionally we have always Christened children within one of our services and shared cake and coffee with the family afterwards. There were 2 weddings and one funeral. Funerals for members of the farming community tend to be very well attended.

We have also enthusiastically taken part in the work of the Wild About Lothersdale group and have a wildflower meadow and birdboxes in our churchyard.

Our Beautiful Building

The building was an early design of R Chantrell and was built and consecrated within 1838. Until Lothersdale Church was erected, the village was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Carleton and people had a long walk if they wanted to attend an Anglican service. It was perhaps as a result of the dale's isolation that Lothersdale became a stronghold of Quakers.

The church has, of course, moved with times and there is a well-illustrated brochure available in the church for those who wish to learn its full history, and read the stories behind the stained glass windows.



One of the things that makes it unusual and particularly beautiful is the font in the centre of the nave. There is something about this layout which makes the church especially inviting. We also have a "Mouseman Thompson" mouse carved on the entrance door.

Another very welcome, and modern addition, is the meeting room at the altar end of the church. This was created in 2000 using money bequeathed by a parishioner. This is equipped with a small oven and microwave and allows to serve the best breakfast in the Benefice.



Historically there have been lots of improvements made to the church, for instance the organ was installed in the early 20th century and there are several memorial windows. More recent additions include a loop system and a new boiler and heating system installed in 2014, the creation of a children's area and updating the audio-visual system with new speakers, computer, screens etc.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was in December 2020 and did not identify any serious problems. The work identified as needing to be done within 2 years has been completed. This included pointing some of the tower and repairing the pinnacles and involved employing steeplejacks. As the steeplejacks complained about the weight of the trap door we decided it was time to replace the heavy lead door with a steel one. This makes seasonal inspection of the church roof a much easier task. We about to start work on the less urgent tasks, which includes the inspection of all the trees in the grounds.

In the past the church has been used by a Rainbow unit, but at the moment it is solely used for worship. We do, however, advertise our Meeting Room as available for those who need a small venue.

The Church does own the Village Hall, but this is rented from us and run by a team of trustees.

The Churchyard is a beautiful and peaceful place, with many trees. It is entered through 19th Century gates and contains an area for cremated remains.

The Church and its Finances

The number of people attending church has decreased considerably over the last few years with people moving to be nearer their family or becoming less mobile and consequently we receive less money on the plate and by planned giving.

We are able to pay our Share using money that has been invested in more affluent times. We have always paid the full amount asked by the Diocese. Money from the same source or by fund raising activities, such as Beetle drives and coffee mornings, are used to pay for repairs and new equipment, with occasional help from one of the village trusts. Money raised at band concerts and the school coffee morning are donated to charity. At the moment we have about £9000 earmarked for the various tasks listed in the Quinquennial report.

What our People Say

"There is something about this church that makes you feel welcome the moment you come through the door. It takes longer in most other churches" A.S. (a young dad)

"The wonderful people at the church love and care for it, making everyone welcome, for a Christening you get a fully iced cake!! Flowers are everywhere which gives a lovely homely atmosphere. I love everything about the church. I wouldn't want to go anywhere else" G.M. (one of the older members of the congregation)

"I have been coming to the church for over 30 years now and there has never been a time, even during three interregnums, that I haven't found love and support" L.C. (former Church Warden)

"(some) Members of the church are part of our extended school family" L.B. (teacher at village school)

"From chocolate cakes for new mums to Lent lunches, church has always been there. Significant celebrations are often planned by the wonderful church folk including the late Queen's Jubilee celebrations. I love the ongoing interaction with the village school and monthly family orientated services. Children are encouraged at all services with no fear of them crawling or making a noise; and the Easter Egg hunt and the Crib Service are the highlights of the year.

The people of Christ Church Lothersdale have worked hard to make sure it remains current and relevant to the village community."



Our Church in the Wider World

Christchurch is part of the Benefice of Sutton with Cowling and Lothersdale. During Covid lockdown the three PCCs began to meet as one for easier dissemination of general information before dividing into parish meetings to discuss our own matters. This gives us the benefit of being able to share strengths and knowledge and ask advice from the other PCCs as well as the joy of worshipping with a larger group of people as well as being a more economical use of the vicar's time.

Our Treasurer is a member of South Craven and Wharfedale Deanery Synod.

Christchurch is involved in the local Crosshills and District Fellowship of Churches through the clergy.

We have had excellent experience of women priests and are very happy working with them.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is at the moment a large Victorian house opposite Sutton church, but the Diocese is actively searching for a house which is more suitable for the life of a vicar in the 21st century.



Terms of Appointment and Accommodation

The Post is a full time role. Provision of the house includes water rates and Council Tax. All expenses are paid. Removal costs and a resettlement grant are available.

The appointment is made under Common Tenure and is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS. There are six weeks holiday per annum plus Bank Holidays (pro rata). Participation in annual Ministerial Development Review and in-service training is required and an annual retreat is strongly encouraged

The appointment is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.

Is God calling you to this post?

To arrange a visit or conversation, contact:

Archdeacon of Bradford, Ven Dr Andy Jolley, andy.jolley@leeds.anglican.org , 01274 405720; 07973 458403 or Carmel Dylak: carmel.dylak@leeds.anglican.org (0113 353 0290)

Parish Representatives:

Chris Mitchell: christexart@gmail.com

Lynne Cramman: lynne_cramman@hotmail.com

Linda Henderson: lmhenderson919@gmail.com

Anne Sollberger: annesollberger2@gmail.com

Closing Date: Midnight **on Sunday 1st October 2023**

Interviews will be held on **Friday 20th October 2023** followed by a further meeting with the Diocesan Bishop prior to a final offer of the post.

The Diocese of Leeds

The Diocese of Leeds was formed at Easter 2014. It is one of the largest dioceses in the country covering an area of around 2425 square miles and a population of around 2642400 people. The diocese comprises five Episcopal areas, each served by a suffragan Bishop. Each Episcopal Area is coterminous with an Archdeaconry.

The Diocesan Vision is 'confident Christians, growing churches, transforming communities and so helping share the Good News of Jesus Christ across our Diocese'. This Vision is embedded into the Diocesan Strategy and Goals.



Our goals

- ① Thriving as a distinctive diocese whose culture is shaped by a shared vision and values
- ② Re-Imagining ministry
- ③ Nurturing lay discipleship
- ④ Building leadership pathways
- ⑤ Growing young people as Christians

The Diocese is a mix of urban and rural. The area includes the major cities of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield; the large industrial and post-industrial towns of Halifax, Huddersfield and Dewsbury; the market towns of Harrogate, Skipton, Ripon, Richmond and Wetherby; and the deeply rural area of the Yorkshire Dales.

The Diocese is unique in having three cathedrals; Bradford, Ripon and Wakefield. The Deans of the Cathedrals work together to provide key diocesan services.