

Seven Sowers Benefice Profile 2020



sevensowers.org.uk

Putting mission and evangelism at the heart of all that we do



Welcome to the Seven Sowers Benefice Profile

We offer a warm welcome from the church wardens and parishioners of the Benefice. The seven rural parishes that comprise the Benefice are set in a wonderful part of Somerset, just south of Taunton. Here we set out a description of our vision, which we hope will form a good basis in helping you discern if God is calling you to serve Him in the Seven Sowers Benefice.

Clearly the pandemic has had and will have an impact on church as a whole. As our Archdeacon, Simon Hill, observed, the Benefice has a number of very committed people who have endeavoured to witness effectively through this time, where the emphasis has been that the church is open, even if the buildings are closed. It is clear that this Benefice will need someone who is able to take forward what has been learned during this time, is flexible in their approach and is able to harness the gifts of people in the parishes in the spirit of Setting God's People Free: the profile needs to be read in the light of this. We will be looking for someone who is going to be able to address positively the issues the churches in this Benefice, like all churches, are going to have to face in the immediate future.

The Profile which follows sets out how we see ourselves (and how others see us) in normal time.

We are committed to seeing God's work grow and develop, both within the church and wider community, one of the most encouraging areas being the work with children and young people.

We established a new service pattern five years ago, offering a variety of styles of worship to meet the diverse needs of our congregations; post lockdown we will be exploring new ideas about how to strengthen the appeal of worship in the rural community. There are many opportunities to discover the joys and challenges of rural ministry and mission, alongside supportive colleagues who work hard together, but also have a lot of fun.

The Ministry Team and church wardens work closely together on day to day matters and usually meet three times a year allowing the group to pray together, discuss ministry and mission, and take stock of what is going well and what requires further prayer and attention.

Each of the churches in the Seven Sowers Benefice provides a focus for Christian worship and outreach in that community. Local people feel a sense of belonging and allegiance, as was shown in our recent survey. Working together across the Benefice enables us to offer a rich variety of worship styles and community activities. We look forward to the new incumbent encouraging the development of this with imagination and sensitivity.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God

Phillipians 4:6



We are the Seven Sowers Benefice



Benefice Profile for the parishes in the Seven Sowers Benefice

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1. Vision

Through our teaching, worship and activities, we seek to put mission and evangelism at the heart of all that we do.

Using the Five Marks of Mission as our basis, we have a Benefice Development Plan. It has been important for us to reflect the strength of Community and the breadth and diversity of views across the Benefice.

The seven headings in the plan under which the vision for the Benefice is set out are the following:

- i. To encourage a vibrant Christian faith in our members lives;
- ii. To encourage small home groups within church;
- iii. To develop work amongst children;
- iv. To develop work amongst 13-40s;
- v. To develop leaders with the church (every member ministry);
- vi. To utilise ministerial gifts to the full;
- vii. To ensure the needs of older people are adequately addressed.

The full Benefice Development Plan is available to view at

<http://www.sevensowers.org.uk/benefice-plan/> It shows the milestones that mark the progress we have made, recognising that there is still much to do in an ever changing community.

The areas which the church wardens have focussed on recently fall under the following headings:

- i. Welcome
When someone moves into our parish, do we make sure that a welcome is extended? When a new face appears at a church service, are they made welcome at the door? Does this welcome come from the whole congregation? Is the welcome reinforced with refreshments before or after the service?
- ii. Discipleship
Evidence of discipleship is found in the well-established prayer circle, the home groups, the extensive work with schools and children, messy church, lent lunches and development of lay involvement in services.
- iii. Evangelism
We have an active programme of prayer visiting each summer, which rotates around the seven communities. Other than that, however, this is an area which is not overtly evidenced in the Benefice, although perhaps we, as Christians, are subtly evangelising without necessarily recognising it.

We share the Good News of Christ's love and offer of forgiveness and new life through the more informal Messy Church, which meets once a month on a Saturday afternoon; the twice-yearly Benefice Worship for All service, which starts with bacon butties and coffee; and Stoke Tots, which meets each week in term time at Thurlbear School. These all aim to build relationships with families and non-churchgoers.

iv. Giving

We studied the patterns of giving but recognised that we have not embarked on an organised stewardship campaign for some years.

v. Pastoral considerations

With such a large rural area and communities that are spread out it is necessary to have a well-structured Pastoral input in the Benefice Parishes. The seven churches provide a web of connected individuals who share information and concerns. The ordained clergy follow up information and visit in a coordinated way if necessary. New people are usually welcomed with a visit from a local church member, a copy of the Parish Magazine and other information.

The phone numbers of the Benefice Pastoral Care Team, Prayer Circle and church wardens can be found in the Parish Magazine. These individuals are able to give help and advice and also pass the names to the Clergy, if appropriate.

Prayer visiting in the Parishes shows that the local church cares for people in the community regardless of whether they attend church.

vi. Communications

The primary mode of communication within the Benefice is through the monthly Parish Magazine, about which more is said later in the profile.

vii. Clerical support

We have recently employed some clerical help for the Ordained Clergy.

viii. PCC meetings

There will be three joint meetings of the seven parishes each year, which the Rector will be invited to chair.



2. Who we are looking for?

We are seeking a person of vision, who has a heart for God and for the people and who will:

- **Relate** well to individuals and families at a personal level, encouraging them in the Christian Faith.
- **Teach** the essentials of Christian faith and communicate the good news of the gospel, building on biblically based teaching and preaching, making it relevant to today.
- Have a heart for **prayer, mission** and **pastoral care**, building strong links with the local community.
- **Lead, inspire** and **work** with the Ministry Team and leaders within the Benefice, identifying gifts and giving encouragement.
- **Minister** with care and sensitivity through traditional services and modern forms of worship being open to new ideas and fresh expressions of church.
- Have enthusiasm to **encourage** and **release** the gifts of the laity to develop links within the communities served.



Things we do well



Children's Work



Variety of worship

Breathtaking Buildings



Discipleship



Places of peace in a troubled world



Ministry Team

Active prayer circle



Financial stability of parishes



2. The Rectory and its setting

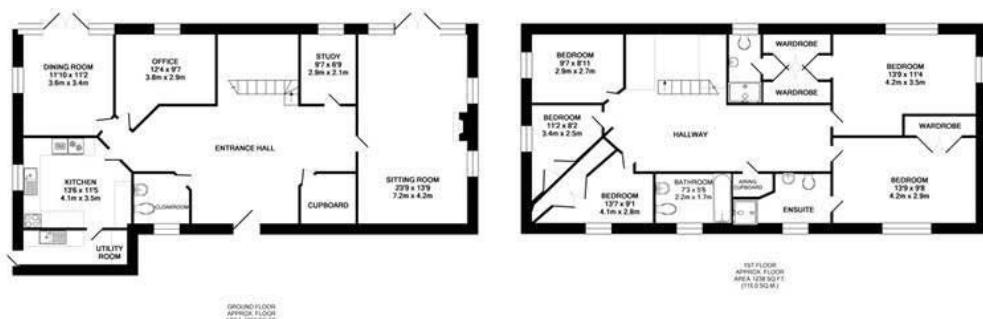
i. Map of the Taunton area showing the Benefice



ii. The Rectory



- Lies in the heart of the village of Stoke St Mary.
- It is a detached and spacious five-bedroom family home built in 2004.
- The accommodation comprises a large entrance hallway, cloakroom, kitchen, utility room, dining room, office, study, sitting room, large walk in storage cupboard, five bedrooms (of which two are en-suite), dressing room and family bathroom.
- The property benefits from oil fired central heating, ample driveway parking, enclosed rear garden, double garage and Broadband connection over 30Mbps.



iii. Round and About

Stoke St Mary is ten minutes from Taunton town centre, with access to the M5 and trains to Paddington (an hour and forty minutes away). By car, Exeter is thirty miles to the South and Bristol forty miles to the North, both offering excellent airports, shopping, theatre, music and sporting attractions.

For the outdoor enthusiast, Exmoor National Park is less than half an hour away and Dartmoor about forty minutes. The Jurassic coastline of Dorset and the North Devon coast are both about forty minutes away. As a rural environment, there is the full gamut of countryside pursuits on the doorstep.

The Rectory is in the catchment area of Thurlbear C of E Primary School, which is always fully subscribed and was rated good in June 2018. Taunton is well served with educational establishments at primary and secondary levels as well as having a dynamic college of further education.

As the county town, Taunton has a broad range of shops and local services. It is the home of Somerset Cricket Club as well as the England Ladies cricket team. It also has thriving rugby, football and hockey clubs.

The town has long associations with the military, witnessed to great effect in the county museum. The Royal Marines 40 Commando is based just outside the town.

Farming is a vital part of the local landscape; livestock auctions and agricultural shows are the shop window, open equally to the public and those whose livelihood depends on them. Much of the local agricultural land is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and, until recently, the Crown Estates. The sale of land and property by the Crown in 2018 was a subject of direct relevance to many in the Benefice and understandably generated much anxiety among those involved.

Public transport in the rural areas is poor, with most people being dependent on their cars.

3. Benefice

i. What does it comprise?

Geographically, the Benefice covers 27 square miles and it is bisected by a major trunk road linking the M5 and the A303, with three parishes to the east and four to the west. Whilst the only viable means of transport is car, the distances are not great. From the Rectory at Stoke St Mary there is no part of the Benefice which is more than fifteen minutes away (horses and tractors permitting!).

ii. Thumbnail sketches of each of the parishes.



St James's Church, Beercrocombe

Beercrocombe (pop 134) www.beercrocombe.org

A small community with no shop, pub or school, the church being the only public building in the village. The village hall in neighbouring Curry Mallet is shared with Beercrocombe. The predominant local economic activity is farming and most people in employment commute to work by car. The population is generally older than the national average but includes a broad mix of working and retired people and a number of younger couples with dependent children.



All Saints' Church, Curry Mallet

Curry Mallet (pop 345) www.currymallet.org

A Duchy of Cornwall village with a Public House/Restaurant (The Bell), a Post Office and a General Store, a village hall and a church Primary School (80 pupils). There is an irregular bus service to Taunton. A small, affordable housing development has been completed in the village.



St John's Church, Hatch Beauchamp

Hatch Beauchamp (pop 511) www.hatchbeauchamp.com

This village has light industry in the form of a fencing company, a pre-cast concrete works and several units built on the site of the old station yard. There is an inn (The Hatch Inn), a hotel (Farthings), Beauchamp House Nursing Home, a garage and a church Primary School (25 pupils). A village hall is located adjacent to a playing field and multi-use games area. Hatch Court and Hatch Park are large country house estates in the village.



Orchard Portman (pop 60)

St Michael's is set in this small village on the edge of Taunton Racecourse and Polo Club. The Cygnet Hospital and Lemon Tree Nursery School are in the village and the church has connections with both.



St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine

Staple Fitzpaine (pop 330) www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Staple Fitzpaine is the largest of the three villages/hamlets in the parish of St Peter's. Staple Fitzpaine (pop 133), Bickenhall (pop 81) and Curland (pop 116) are situated on the Blackdown Hills in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is an inn (The Greyhound) at Staple Fitzpaine, Alms Houses and a small, affordable housing development. Neroche village hall is situated midway between Bickenhall and Curland, and hosts monthly community lunches. Staple Fitzpaine is on a bus route with services to Taunton, Chard and Ilminster. Each year there is a lively calendar of social events.



St Mary's Church, Stoke St Mary

Stoke St Mary (pop 426) www.stokestmary.info

Stoke St Mary is a compact village within easy reach of Taunton (3 miles). There is a congregational chapel, an inn (Half Moon), a village hall and a landscape gardening company. The church has three magnificent stained-glass windows by the celebrated local artist, Patrick Reyntiens.



St Andrew's Church, West Hatch

West Hatch (pop 243)

A scattered village on either side of the A358 between Hatch Beauchamp and Stoke St Mary. There is an RSPCA rescue centre, a Public House/Restaurant (The Farmers Inn) and a village hall adjacent to the church. The Huish Woods Scout Camp is located in West Hatch.



St Thomas's, Thurlbear

Thurlbear

Thurlbear is a scattered village just under a mile from Stoke St Mary with a large church primary school (210 pupils), which draws children from the outskirts of Taunton. St Thomas's is a redundant church in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust with no electric lighting. The school has a close association with it. The Benefice Advent Service is celebrated in the church on Advent Sunday in the late afternoon, lit by candles.



Parachute games at HBK

Key statistics in summary (2019):

	Electoral Roll	Members	Income £	Expenses £	Reserves £	Parish Share Paid?
Beercrocombe	18	8	7,480(u)	8,656(r)	82,399(u) 387(r)	In full
Curry Mallet	25	17	15,888(u) 2,851(r)	18,555(u)	17,588(u) 8,435(r)	In full
Hatch Beauchamp	30	12	13,417(u) 16,490(r)	13,681(u) 2,488(r)	11,886(u) 33,411(r)	In full
Orchard Portman	20	12	7,130 (u) 20,260 (r)	9,524 (u) 1,636 (r)	6,802 u 19,604 (r)	In full
Staple Fitzpaine	23	16	20,989(u) 1,180(r)	22,544(u) 1,622(r)	17,632(u) 3,571(r)	In full
Stoke St Mary	39	24	23,332(u) 2,411(r)	19,720(u) 1,713(r))	10,103(u) 30,387(r)	In full
West Hatch	25	8	7,981(u)	8,765(u)	15,550(u) 123(r)	In full

Copies of the 2019 report and accounts for each PCC can be viewed at
<http://www.sevensowers.org.uk/the-churches/>

iii. How well integrated is the Benefice?

It would be fair to say that most people owe closer allegiance to their parish than to the Benefice. Whilst this is understandable, we would look to the new incumbent to lead and work with all church members further to integrate the Benefice. The monthly benefice-wide service is a natural platform to encourage communities to come closer together through worship and fellowship.

iv. How are we coping in the Vacancy (and the pandemic)?

Any Vacancy can be a challenging time but, with a positive mindset at the start, it can definitely be turned to advantage. As church wardens we took inspiration from the Church Pastoral Aid Society booklet “Growing through a Vacancy”, which set us firmly on the right path. We also took great comfort from being able to fill the House-for-Duty post, shortly before the Vacancy started, with a very experienced ordained Minister. Together with our well established non-stipendiary Minister we felt able to face the vacancy with confidence. Our outgoing Rector had left us with a good service plan that is operating well during the vacancy. A churchwarden group that works well together with the Ministry Team, and active PCCs, have greatly aided the smooth running of the Benefice.

Not only have we been able to maintain our service plan but we have added to it with, for example, a service (last year) on Ascension Day and two prayer mornings. Congregation numbers (and those attending Messy Church, holiday clubs etc) have not suffered and attendance at Christmas services continued to increase in popularity.

The response of our Benefice to the onset of the pandemic was very encouraging. In the early stages of the lockdown, our Ministry Team set up a Zoom service on Sunday mornings, with a service sheet and linked hymn music, which allowed the congregations from across the Benefice to come together in worship. Many who are not habitual churchgoers have taken part. Our church warden group doubled the frequency of their meetings and took a proactive approach to opening their churches for private prayer and later for public worship. Some activities, sadly, had to be put on hold, notably the very exciting initiatives with schools and children; our children’s worker was temporarily furloughed. Pastoral care too had to switch from personal visits to conversations over the phone but, throughout our rural communities, neighbours have looked out for neighbours.

The churchwardens and PCCs have taken the opportunity of locked churches to carry out essential maintenance and developments. Beercrocombe has had part of St James’s church re-plastered and painted, the gates at St Michael’s Orchard Portman have been refurbished by a member of the congregation and additional lighting, electrical testing and treatment of the doors has been done at St John’s, Hatch Beauchamp.



During the pandemic the magazine committee has continued to distribute the same number of copies as previously and has been able to publish details of help and support in the communities. It has also provided some normality to those isolated at home and has been well supported by contributions of articles and photos from local people.

We look to building on initiatives of this nature in the future.

v. The Ministry Team

We are blessed with a dedicated and well-balanced ministry team, the members of which are:



Christabel Ager, a non-stipendiary associate minister, who joined the Benefice as a curate following her ordination in July 2010. Christabel says: "In my working life, I've been a teacher, librarian and school chaplain. God called me to train for readership and after licensing in 2000, I was on the Ministry Team in a busy town centre church. But he hadn't finished with me yet! I was ordained in 2010 and came to serve my curacy in the Seven Sowers Benefice, which I loved so much that I left school in 2014 and have been allowed to stay in the Benefice as Associate Minister."



Stephen Jones, an associate vicar (House-for-Duty), who has been in the Benefice since August 2018. He lives in the Rectory at Hatch Beauchamp and has been an ordained minister for 40 years; "We are privileged to enter ministry again after three years in retirement. It is great to be part of a team, teaching and caring in these various seven churches. We are thankful for the welcome we have received in the Benefice and villages. We look forward to the challenge ahead sharing the good news of Jesus with all who are open to God."



Sue McKen, a Lay Reader, who was licenced in autumn 2018; "I am a retired physics teacher, married with two grown-up children and three granddaughters. I am a Reader and churchwarden in the Benefice and enjoy working with local children in HBK and Hatch Beauchamp Primary school. I love mountain walking and sailing with family and friends."



Clive Hayward, Reader Emeritus, "Married with two grown children and a retired chartered Civil Engineer I steadily progressed as a Christian during my married life. I felt called to be a Reader when we moved to Hatch Beauchamp in 1989. I went into training and was licensed in 1994. I actively participated in services and other church activities until very recently when I have reluctantly had to take a back seat for health reasons. I am now in my eighties and have been designated Reader Emeritus."



Brian Crudge, a Lay Reader. "I was admitted as Reader in February 1970 and on appointment as Headteacher of Thurlbear School in September 1980, transferred to this United Parish, now Benefice. On retirement in 2007, I continued my ministry in the Benefice. Confined to 'light duties' due to ongoing illness, I continue to assist whenever possible."



Holly Stevens, a Children's, Schools and Families worker (20 hours a week); "I am the Children, Schools and Families worker; my role incorporates visiting the schools, leading family services (WfA), leading collective worship (assembly) and being involved in many various family activities and events. I love singing and creating various crafts in my spare time."

In recent years there has been a growth of vocations within the Benefice, including one person who has gone on to be ordained to serve in a neighbouring benefice.

The Ministry Team meets approximately every six weeks for prayer, discussion and planning. Each Thursday they meet for prayer.

vi. Monthly service rota

The Benefice has an established service rota for the seven churches, an example of which is shown below. The three churches with the lowest membership share hosting the benefice-wide services. On the third Sunday of the month, the benefice service is held at West Hatch; on the fifth Sunday, the service alternates between Orchard Portman and Beercrocombe. All churches stand in a fairly broad tradition and the service pattern aims to accommodate this in the range of styles of worship offered: BCP communion, family communion, worship-for-all and BCP evensong.

Children are particularly welcome at the worship-for-all service at Stoke St Mary on the fourth Sunday, which is taken by the Children's Worker. Also, on the third Sunday, the Children's Worker meets with the children for Sunday Gang in the West Hatch village hall before joining their parents at the benefice service before communion. After the mid-month worship-for-all service at West Hatch, a cooked lunch is provided in the village hall next door.

	8.30am BCP HC	10am Parish Communion	10am Worship for All	Evening services
1 st Sat				HB Village Hall 4-5.30pm Messy Church
1 st Sun	Stoke St Mary	Curry Mallet Staple Fitzpaine	Hatch Beauchamp	Orchard Portman Evensong
2 nd Sun	West Hatch	Hatch Beauchamp Stoke St Mary	Curry Mallet	
3 rd Sun	Beercrocombe	West Hatch 10.30am Benefice Communion (incorporating Sunday Gang)		
3 rd Wed				Staple Fitzpaine 6.30pm Reflective Worship
4 th Sun	Hatch Beauchamp	Beercrocombe Orchard Portman	Stoke St Mary	
5 th Sun		Beercrocombe or Orchard Portman Benefice Service		

There are several special services around the time of Christmas and Easter. During Lent a devotional service with a themed talk is held each week, normally in Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, followed by a simple lunch.

vi. Lay involvement

There is lay involvement across all the churches; the monthly reflective worship at Staple Fitzpaine and the worship-for-all services on the second Sunday at Curry Mallet and the fourth Sunday at Stoke St Mary are all lay led. Several churches also have intercession leaders. Additional training for Lay volunteers has been provided through the 'Worship Helper' Course. Every church has a monthly rota for sidesmen, readers, cleaners, flower arrangers, coffee providers etc. Some churches have choirs which are active throughout the year, others only at Christmas.

Bells are rung at every church, although not necessarily at every service, and some teams ring at more than one church.



Curry Mallet bell ringers

Details of services and those on duty for the month at each service are published in the Parish magazine, distributed to 750 homes. In addition to being highly informative about what is going on in the area, any surplus the magazine generates is shared out amongst the churches. It also provides a valuable communication tool within the local communities and an excellent opportunity for outreach.

vii. Home groups, Alpha courses

There are two home groups in the area, which meet regularly.

Other groups meeting regularly are the Women's Family Focus Group (Hatch Beauchamp), the Round Window Club (for the elderly – Curry Mallet) and the St Peter's Singers (Staple Fitzpaine). Children's groups are covered in the next section.

We aim to run an Alpha course each year, usually in someone's home.

5. School links and Children's Worker

i. Schools

There are three primary schools in the Benefice. Curry Mallet (80 pupils) and Hatch Beauchamp (25 pupils) are both Voluntary Controlled; Thurlbear - just outside Stoke St Mary – (210 pupils) is Voluntary Aided.

ii. Children's Worker

The Benefice has employed a Children's, Schools and Families Worker for almost eleven years on a part-time basis (20 hours per week).

School-related activities include leading collective worship each week (alternating with other members of the Ministry Team), Open the Book, and a weekly mothers' and tots' group at Thurlbear.

On the fourth Sunday of the month, there is a Worship-for-All service at Stoke St Mary led by the Children's Worker.

iii. Benefice wide activities

The Children's Worker also runs the Sunday Gang for under 11's, which meets in West Hatch village hall on the third Sunday of the month, before joining the main service in church.

Messy Church (for all ages) meets in Hatch Beauchamp village hall on the first Saturday of each month and is reaching a growing number of families, some of whom also attend the Worship-for-All and other 'special' services.





HBK (Hatch Beauchamp Kids for 7 – 11 year-olds), meets each week at 6.00pm in Hatch Beauchamp village hall for fun activities.

iv. Safeguarding

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is taken very seriously. There is a Safeguarding Officer for the Benefice and each of the parishes has their own Safeguarding Policy, reviewed at least annually by the respective PCCs.

This is my command: Love each other

John 15:17

6. Notes on the churches, buildings and sundry activities

i. Church wardens and PCCs

There are eleven church wardens. Four churches have two wardens; three churches have one each; all seven churches have fully-functioning PCCs, with Treasurers and Secretaries.



The church wardens

ii. Buildings

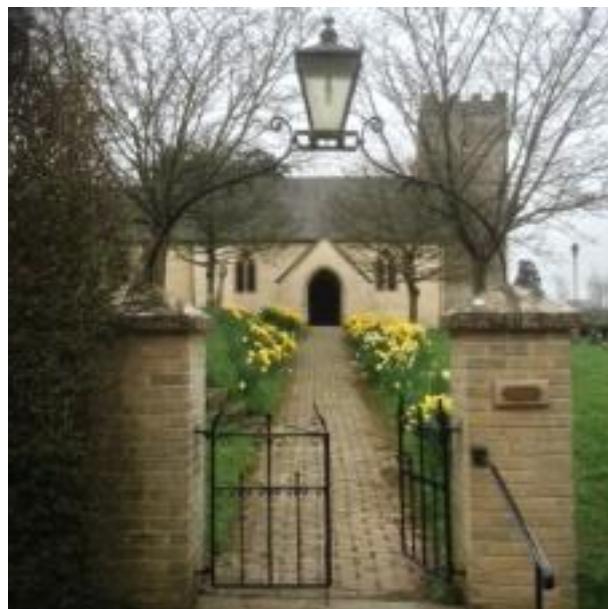
There are no church halls. The only buildings under the management of the PCCs are the seven churches plus the churchyard at Thurlbear. All the churches are listed, being either Grade 1 or 2*.

Churches are due their next Quinquennial inspections as follows:

Beercrocombe (2023), Curry Mallet (2023), Hatch Beauchamp (2022), Orchard Portman (2022), Staple Fitzpaine (2020), Stoke St Mary (2024), West Hatch (2021).

There are no major works outstanding from the previous Quinquennial which will not be addressed before the next inspection is held.

Most of the churches have undergone major works of repair or re-ordering in recent years but all the costs of these works have been met and there is no overhang of expenditure for future periods.



St Mary's Church,
Stoke St Mary

iii. Church activities and fundraising

There is a wealth of activities outside worship engaged in by the seven churches – social, fundraising, outreach – and typical of what one would expect in country parishes: plant sales, flower shows, scarecrow competitions, bazaars, carol singing around the village, concerts and so-on.

iv. Benefice administrative office

There is an office at the Rectory at Hatch Beauchamp, where most documentation is produced. A part-time administrative assistant (8 hours) has been employed.



7. Ilminster Deanery Information

The Deanery, part of the Taunton Archdeaconry, comprises 33 parishes grouped into six benefices with two standalone parishes. When fully staffed there are seven full-time, one half-time, four house-for-duty and three self-supporting clergy plus a number of readers. Although small the chapter is active meeting monthly across the Deanery with several social events throughout the year.

We are located in the far south-west of both the Diocese and Somerset, with one parish, Thorncombe, lying in Dorset. The total population is around 36,000, with around half living in Chard and Ilminster.

Deanery Synod meets three times a year around the Deanery and meetings are open to all. Each Deanery in the Bath and Wells Diocese has produced a Mission Action Plan which forms the framework for our mission and outreach. Deanery oversight comes through the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group which comprises a small number of clergy and laity chaired jointly by the Area Dean and Lay Dean.

8. Diocesan Vision

"In response to God's immense love for us, we seek to be God's people living and telling the story of Jesus."

Our vision speaks of the story of Jesus; his life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection; the story which is the context of our faith and the content of our message.

We seek **to live** this story as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world and **to tell** it, both in sharing the good news and by the way in which our lives speak about Him. The diocesan strategy is built around three priorities:

- i. To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do;

- ii. To re-align our resources towards mission;
- iii. To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

The priorities provide a framework for decision-making and planning at parish, benefice, deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels. The Diocese runs an extensive CMD programme for clergy and readers as well as lay training courses.

The Diocese has a Rural Life Adviser and a Flourishing Rural Churches Group to support rural parishes and also provides mentors as required to clergy.



Service held at St Andrew's Church, West Hatch,
to celebrate marriage down the decades.



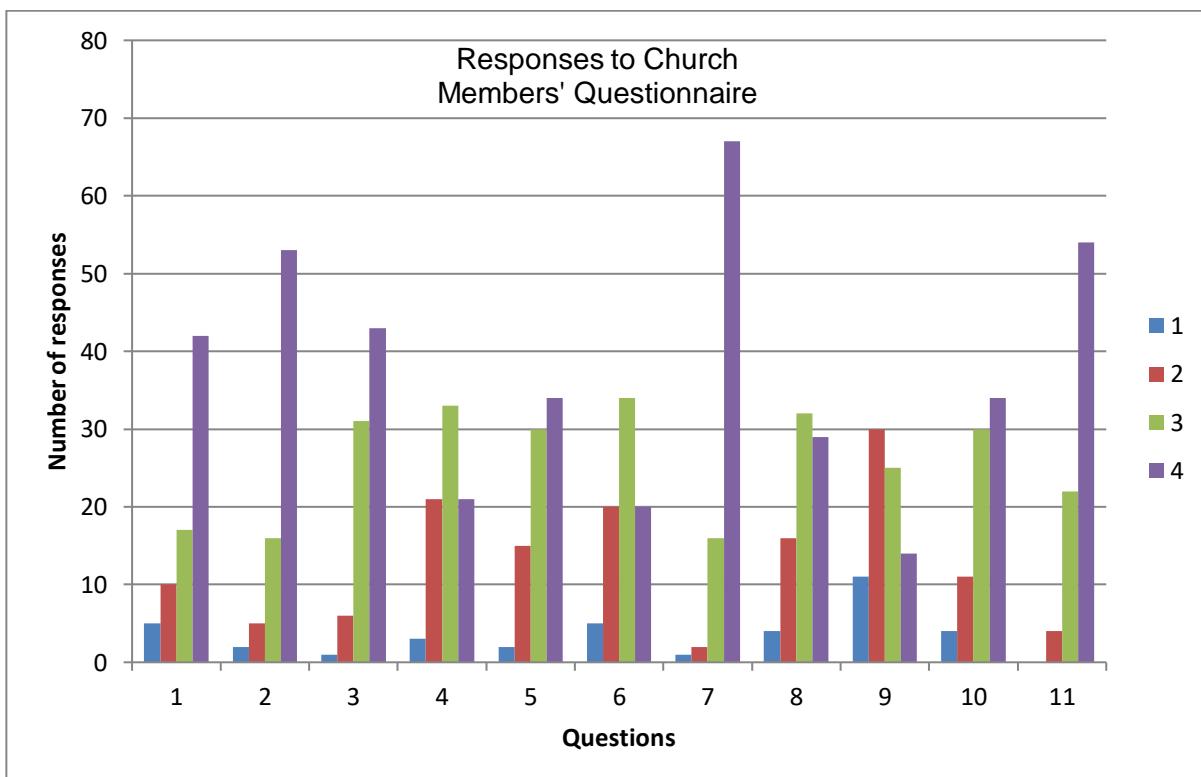
Recent weddings in Orchard Portman and Stoke St Mary

Appendix to the Seven Sowers Benefice Profile

Church Members' Vision Questionnaire Overview of Responses

Thinking about The Seven Sowers Benefice, please score each of these qualities from 1 – 4, with 4 being MOST needed in the new Rector.

	A Rector who is gifted in.....	1	2	3	4
1	Communicating the good news of the gospel	5	10	17	42
2	Teaching the essentials of our faith, making it relevant to today	2	5	16	53
3	Inspiring and managing a team	1	6	31	43
4	Building teams and equipping us all for service of different sorts in the Benefice	3	21	33	21
5	Being open to change and innovation	2	15	30	34
6	Identifying gifts and stretching our capabilities	5	20	34	20
7	Relating well to individuals and families at a personal level	1	2	16	67
8	Encouraging stronger links between churches in the Benefice	4	16	32	29
9	Widening our horizons to look beyond the Benefice and Diocese and fostering links	11	30	25	14
10	Demonstrating Godly wisdom and discernment	4	11	30	34
11	Building strong links with the local communities	0	4	22	54



Thoughts from Children in our Schools

