

# A TEAM VICAR (HALF-TIME) FOR THE PARISHES OF COMBERTON, AND TOFT IN THE BENEFICE OF THE LORDSBRIDGE TEAM



## Welcome

We hope that you will find this profile and appointment pack helpful in deciding whether God is calling you to be Team Vicar in the Lordsbridge Team. This 0.5 FTE post (3 days plus Sunday) will provide exciting opportunities for someone who is committed to rural and semi-rural ministry and is comfortable to work collaboratively with a wide range of colleagues and communities. We are looking for a priest who has a creative approach to growing the kingdom of God in this area, and a sense of fun!

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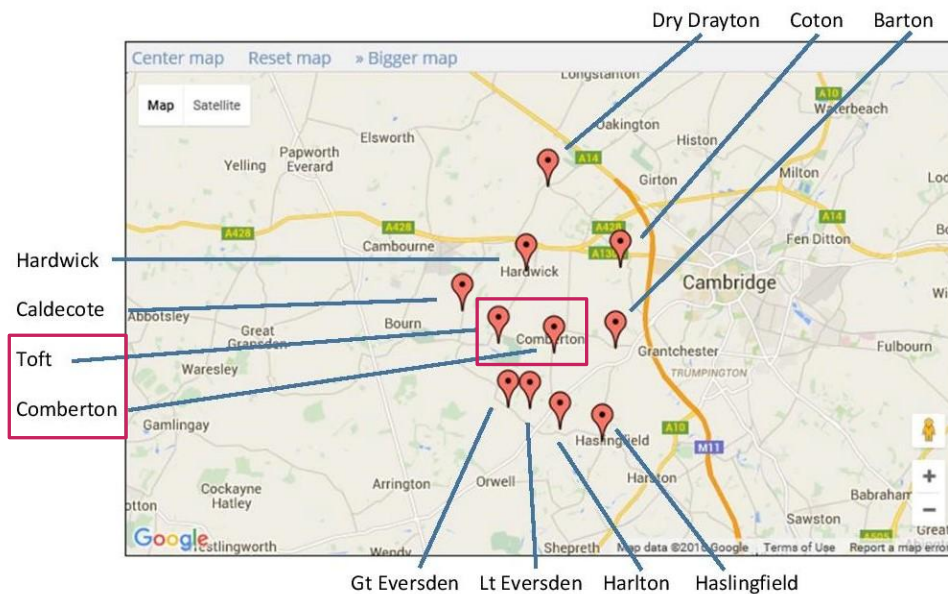
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# 1. Introduction

The Lordsbridge Team is a benefice of eleven parishes and seventeen worshipping communities situated approximately six miles west of Cambridge. The Parishes of Comberton and Toft are near neighbours in the centre of our team with populations of 2,500, and 600 people respectively. It only takes about 20 minutes of brisk walking along the ancient Lot pathway to walk between the two Churches.

The new Team Vicar will be part of the Lordsbridge Core Team which currently consists of two full time stipendiary posts, plus a MSE with incumbent status. We are well-supported by a large Team Chapter of retired, self-supporting and lay ministers, a paid Team Administrator and a paid Team Treasurer.

Our parishes offer a diversity of worship styles from traditional worship to online worship and forest church.



## 2. The Person We Are Looking For

In addition to the prayer life, preaching & teaching, pastoral and leadership skills that are essential for any Team Vicar, we feel that there are some things that are distinctive to this post.

Within our 11 parishes, we work in a truly collaborative fashion through our Core Team, and Team Chapter.

We are looking for someone who will enjoy working with us in this way and will help us to flourish.

This person will:

- Feel called to rural, and semi-rural ministry
- Be comfortable with a part-time working pattern
- Be confident with a variety of worship styles
- Have the energy, organisational skills, and creativity to juggle multiple tasks across communities, develop and implement change sensitively, whilst retaining a sense of humour
- Be confident with building relationships, and enjoy working with a wide variety of people
- Be financially literate

This is a 0.5FTE role; the person appointed will have responsibility for 2 of our parishes, Comberton and Toft, working on a part-time basis of 3 days plus Sunday. This role has an assigned vicarage in Comberton, detailed later in the profile.

It is an occupational requirement for the post holder to have a full UK driving license.

### 3. Team Vicar Role and Responsibilities

#### Parish Responsibilities

- To take responsibility for the parishes of Comberton and Toft
- Develop mission and ministry in the two parishes, following the C of E's 'mixed ecology model' (known as the 'blended economy' in Ely diocese), including:
  - Encouraging and developing the mission and ministry of the teams of lay people and associate clergy
  - growing new congregations
  - developing and sustaining church involvement in the village schools
  - addressing specific challenges of finance and governance (with the Core Team)
  - developing community engagement with the Church building
- Partner with others in the parishes to identify and tackle social need, and work for the common good.
- Work with ecumenical partners on joint projects such as study groups, youth work and mission

#### Team Responsibilities

- To work collaboratively within the Team.
- Represent Comberton and Toft at the weekly Core Team meeting - for prayer, development of ideas, vision, mutual support, Q&A, shared decision making and accountability.
- To have shared oversight and delivery of the practical and organisational tasks that work best across the whole Team
- Share leadership of the Lordsbridge Team with the Team Rector and other members of the Core Team: to offer and receive mutual support and accountability, to be generous with resources and skills, and to share communication and decision-making.
- Take on specific Lordsbridge Team-wide responsibilities as appropriate to expertise and interests.

#### Safeguarding

- To ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled at parish level in collaboration with the Parish Safeguarding Officers, and Team Administrator.

## 4. The Parishes of Comberton and Toft

### St Mary's Comberton

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#### Who We Are



Church at St Mary's is very much about prayer, partnership and proclamation. It is about people, relationships and community well-being. Currently we have 69 people on our electoral role (April 2025). The average size of our congregation in 2025 was 31 adults and 3 children.

The church family understands the importance of sharing the good news of Jesus, both in actions and words. Many of the members are involved in community organisations and groups, providing a positive impact on life in the village. The church's annual events, including coffee mornings and seasonal fairs, also bring the church into village life and vice versa.



Some of the St Mary's Church Congregation, Summer 2023

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#### Ministry Team

Our current team at St Mary's includes our two Associate Priests, two Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM) and a retired priest with PTO. Members of the Team Chapter and congregation are fully involved in helping to lead worship.

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#### What our Vicar can expect from us

We look forward to welcoming you to St Mary's.

- We will work with you in every way that we can to develop new initiatives, manage finances, oversee safeguarding and ensure that housekeeping type tasks are completed.
- We will also respect the days that you are not in parish and ensure that expenses are paid regularly according to Diocesan formulae
- We will support you to settle into your new life in our vibrant village community and do our best to answer any questions you might ask us.

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## What We Do

- Weekly (Holy Communion or Morning Worship) at 9.30am and fortnightly BCP Holy Communion at 8.00am.
- Lordsbridge Team Zoom Service at 11am.
- Tuesday Morning Prayer on Zoom at 9.30am.
- Wednesday Compline on Zoom at 8.00pm.
- Fortnightly Home Groups – Thursday morning, afternoon or evening.
- Monthly Oasis Tea activity for Seniors, held in the Village Hall partnering with Comberton Baptist Church.
- Social and fundraising events throughout the year.
- Annual art exhibition
- Time to Talk listening service in collaboration with local GP surgery.
- Periodic Away mornings. The last one in April 2025 led to a sermon series on prayer, partnership and proclamation which is being lived out in service to our community including collaboration with Comberton Baptist Church at the recent village Festival.
- Comberton Shed – weekly on Wednesdays.
- New for 2025 – Nativity Festival
- New for 2026 – Music Café



Easter Garden at St Mary's

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## Where We Are

Comberton is an historic rural village approximately 6 miles west of Cambridge with a population of around 2,500.



Comberton Village Centre

The village has:

- Village hall used for community events, sales, plays, cinema, etc.
- Three Horseshoes pub, which serves real ale and meals and opens as a café during the day.
- Doctors' surgery.
- Local businesses including dentist, Solicitor, hairdresser, village shops, post office, caravan and camping site.
- Sporting facilities including football pitches, bowling green, tennis courts and an outdoor swimming pool.
- Nursery and pre-school, Meridian Primary School, Comberton Village College and Sixth Form.

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## The Church Building



St Mary's Church, Comberton

The grade 1 listed church is situated on high ground about half a mile south of the village centre and dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Music is provided by a small pipe organ given in memory of those who fell in the First World War, or an electronic keyboard can be used. The 14<sup>th</sup> century tower has four bells which swing chime and are hung from the original 15<sup>th</sup> century frame.

In 2007 a new porch was built on the north side comprising an entrance lobby with level access direct from the car park and accessible toilet facilities. In 2012 a servery was installed in the northwest corner of the church to provide refreshments.

The sound system has been updated in the last 12 months and there is a projector and electronically operated screen. There is a hearing loop in good working order.

Recommendations from the Quinquennial inspection in April 2024 are being progressed and are mostly completed with the work being funded by The Friends of St Mary's. A grant was also secured from our Patron Jesus College to fund the refurbishing of the car park to include 4 disabled parking spaces.

The parish own a small barn on land adjacent to the churchyard which is leased from the local farmer.



Spring Meadow at St Mary's

In May 2022 we were awarded the Silver award from the Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme.

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## What We Want To Do Next

To continue working on prayer, partnership and proclamation of the gospel including making our building, churchyard and activities accessible and welcoming to all regardless of ability.

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## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is integral to all we do, and we are well served by our parish safeguarding officer (PSO) and Lordsbridge Team Administrator, supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and dashboards.

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## The Friends of St Mary's

St Mary's is supported financially by The Friends of St Mary's (FOSM) a charitable organisation who organise fundraising specifically for the upkeep of the fabric of the building and churchyard.

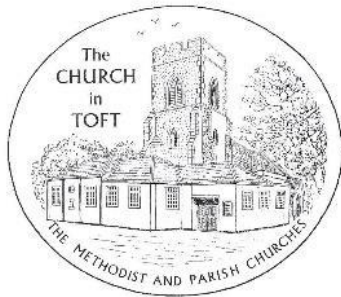


## The Church in Toft – St Andrew's and an LEP legacy

### Where We Are

Toft is a small village set astride the B1046, seven miles west of Cambridge with a population of about 600; housing is mixed in size and type.

### The Church building



Christianity has been present in Toft for around a thousand years and the church building dates from the C13th.

The Church has been in excellent condition until the stresses of last year's weather but has much to offer the church and wider community. It is open daily in daylight hours and we know people drop in regularly.

- A tea and coffee making facility in the South aisle, with sufficient plates, cutlery etc. to cater for 100 people.
- The front pew on either side was removed to enable concerts, nativity plays etc. to have more space; a sound and loop system was installed and the pulpit was lowered.
- The roof of the tower was also redone, including resetting the parapets. These works were funded by donations, a lot of hard work fund-raising and very successful grant applications for funds from various sources. The South aisle roof has also recently been repaired
- First-class heating system
- A disability user-friendly WC and baby changing facilities. Ramps for easy access to the east end and front door.
- The churchyard is looked after by volunteers, and there is a bequest for exclusive use in the churchyard.

A recent quinquennial inspection revealed movement in several of the walls causing stress and damage in particular to the East window; this will result in expensive repairs and whilst we have good reserves, fund-raising will be needed,

There are three bells of ancient origin, to which has been added a fourth bell from Hardwick, and a newly struck bell in 1999 named Richard Howard with Ringing in the Millennium grant money. To this was added in 2001 a sixth bell, John Vince gifted from a parishioner's estate. Toft tower is very popular with ground floor ringing and we have

many visiting bands who come to ring regularly under the keen eye of our tower captain James Wrycroft

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## Worship

In 2003 the Anglican and Methodist churches in the village formed a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Both church and chapel were retained as places of worship and services alternated Sunday by Sunday between these buildings. The members of both denominations however, regarded themselves as belonging to The Church in Toft, doing everything in unity with one another. Sadly this LEP partnership has recently come to an end because of the fragility of the Methodist presence in the village, which resulted in the closure of the Methodist chapel. On the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 the parish church offered an ecumenical welcome to those Methodists who wished to join.

Our main Sunday service is at 11.00am and offers Morning Worship or Eucharist depending on clergy availability. There is also 8.30am BCP Communion, (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays), shared with Comberton. Until recently our other regular act of worship was held every Wednesday morning at 9.30am when there is a half-hour service of Morning Prayer led by a mixed group of lay people and clergy. Its continued existence will be assessed this summer (2026).

The Electoral roll currently stands at 22. The average attendance of people over 16 on Sundays is around 16.

Special services during the year:

- Mothering Sunday
- The Easter sunrise service of light at dawn, open air, with a fire to greet the day.
- Spring Feast/May Day celebration in the village
  - A major event designed to attract people from the whole community. We have always taken a key role in this community celebration.
- Harvest
- An annual Remembrance Day service with the British Legion presence alternating each year between Toft and Comberton.
  - Troops no longer attend this but there are large numbers of young people from the uniformed organisations present and the congregation is often over 150.
  - Toft is a Thankful Village, that is a village to which all its menfolk returned at the end of WWI.
- Christmas Tree, Christingle and Gift service.
  - This is one of our largest and most special services every year with organisations and individuals decorating trees, and everyone bringing presents for the Women's Refuge in Cambridge which we have supported for over 30 years.
- The candlelight Lessons and Carols service is also very well attended.
- We have a dawn open air service every Easter morning



- When possible we create and lead a service at All Souls for the bereaved.
- The Methodist Covenant service is celebrated at the start of each new year.
  - These services are enhanced by our regular Advent and Lent groups held in a church member's home.
- We participate in the Joint Churches ecumenical service held annually at Comberton Village College.
- The village choir, comprising both church and non-church people, hold twice yearly concerts in the church and also sing for occasional special Evensongs



Easter sunrise service of light

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### The Life of the Church

The congregation takes an active part in the upkeep of the parish church and in the care and life of the Church. Coffee is routinely served after all 11.00 services. There is a rota for flower arranging and several people care for the silver and clean the Church.

The P.C.C. meets regularly, and there are a finance and a standing committee who meet when required. One representative regularly represents the Parish at Deanery Synod, at Lordsbridge Team meetings, on the People's Hall committee and the Social Club Committee.

The PCC opted for accounts to be prepared on an accruals basis as this makes it easier to budget and identify trends of income and expenditure more rapidly. An annual thank you letter to donors is written by the Vicar, which the Treasurer distributes. The Parish Share is paid in instalments and in full. The PCC has an annual Budget to control income and expenditure, which is tightly monitored. A percentage of the year's income has traditionally been donated to charity. Fund-raising events in aid of general funds always include a Church Fête or similar and a Christmas Fayre.

The Churchwarden draws up a monthly rota organising who is doing what at each service. We have a prayer list, highlighting some aspect of Toft life for each day of the month.

Music can be provided by either of the 2 organs in the church. At present the church has no regular organist. We have to employ an external organist for weddings and funerals. However the church has a good sound system for playing recorded music and hymns.

Baptisms usually take place during or immediately after an 11.00 service. Marriages average about one every two years.

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### The Church in the Community

The Church in Toft has close ties to its village community, particularly the Warm Hub, supporting a number of charities, and the publishing and distribution of a monthly 'Village Calendar', which gives details of forthcoming events and notices of importance, free to every household. It is partially financed by advertising published

four times a year. It always contains pages from the Parish Council who pay for their contributions.

Christians in the village volunteer in parent and toddler groups as well as the pop-up café. Our Minister visits Home Meadow care home at least once a month and church members sing carols there each year.

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## Village Life

There is no Primary School in the village, but there is a school bus to Meridian School, Comberton. Secondary education is largely provided by Comberton Village College situated on the eastern edge of the Parish.

Within the village there are a number of groups:

- Brownie, Guide and Ranger units
- a Friendship Club for over fifties
- a weekly warm hub in the winter months
- a Photography Club
- a drama group
- a drawing and painting class
- an Historical Society
- a village choir
- a group for young musicians
- a guitar group
- Toft/Session/Gallery Band.



Within Toft village are a good number of amenities, including a village Post Office and Stores, a small area of light industry in the centre of the village at the Mount, and another small group of firms at the eastern end of the village built on what was one of our farms.

Also, various folk run businesses from their homes e.g. Business Weekly, Tebbit Illustration and Graphic Design. There is a home for the elderly called *Home Meadow* in the centre of the village, and The Cambridge Meridian Golf Club.

The People's Hall has undergone a major re-build and now has two rooms upstairs, a good-sized hall, fully equipped kitchen and Social Club downstairs. The Club is open every Thursday and Friday and many Saturdays, and offers, as well as a licensed Bar, social evenings including carpet bowls, quizzes, evenings built round a specific theme, monthly food night.

The People's Hall is also equipped to transform into a theatre, and has the technology to become a cinema with a full sized screen and shows films on a regular basis. Musical acts are booked and put on excellent evenings as well as local home-grown music.

There is also a well-equipped recreation ground, where it is possible to play football. Adjacent to this is a newly acquired piece of public ground – Lot Meadow – which, thanks to much hard work, has been transformed with orchard, picnic seats, wild-flower

garden and woodland. Set up by the Woodland Trust, there is wood on the edge of the village.

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#### Our Key Aims Are

- Growing in faith and the love of God
- Offering a place of prayer and a welcome to all.
- Using our building and its grounds creatively for the welfare, enjoyment and support of the whole community



Spring Feast – St. Andrew's full of pom-poms



Spring Feast at the well

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#### Ministry Team

We are sustained at present by the services of our LLM and a Methodist Local Preacher, who is also a member of the congregation, and by retired and non-stipendiary clergy of both denominations.

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#### What our Vicar can expect from us

- We will endeavour to be supportive and co-operative and be an active part in developing new initiatives; worship and care for our community
- We will endeavour to ensure 'house-keeping' type tasks (rotas, refreshments, cleaning etc.) are done so as to use our ministers time in the best possible way
- The Churchwardens/PCC will keep the Vicar informed of any issues/problems that may be developing
- We will ensure the church is ready and prepared for services, and left in good order afterwards
- We will respect the days the Vicar is not doing Parish work
- We will ensure that the Vicar's expenses are paid monthly, quickly and in full according to the formula and on presentation of the necessary paperwork
- We will ensure that the finances are well kept, and available for review when appropriate.
- With our Safeguarding Officer be aware of any issues that may be developing and support any responses, if needed.
- A beautiful place to live and work in rural Cambridgeshire.

## Worshipping Communities

Both Comberton and Toft hold at least one service on a Sunday every week.

	Population 2021	Usual Sunday Attendance 2025	Regular Worshipping Community 2025 <sup>1</sup>	Electoral Roll
Comberton	2250	41	63	69
Toft	572	16	37	22

<sup>1</sup>Regular worshipping community is one worshipping at least once a month including children

Different worshipping communities working across different mediums

	Youth	Schools	Other churches	Fresh Expressions
Comberton	-	Community primary	Comberton Baptist Church	Monthly Oasis Teas
Toft	-	-	-	-
Lordsbridge-wide	West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM)	Comberton Village College (CVC) & Sixth Form		Thirst (WCCYM) Zoom Worship at Home

## 5. The Vicarage

Comberton Vicarage is a spacious four-bedroom home situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in the centre of the village and is in walking distance of the church and all other village amenities. Cambridge is nearby and accessible by bus.

The property has a private driveway and rear garden. There is a separate garage with storage space above. The downstairs study/office is situated in an annex accessible from within the house and has a separate front door and entrance hall from the exterior.



The Vicarage



The Kitchen



Living Room



Dining Room



The Study



Master Bedroom

## 6. The Lordsbridge Team

Created from smaller benefices, the Lordsbridge Team of Churches, now a team ministry, is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> birthday this year (2026). Each of the incumbent clergy in the team has responsibility for a particular geographical area so that each village knows who its vicar is. Each also takes the lead in specific ministries and projects across the whole benefice, according to need, interest and expertise. Together they share leadership across the whole patch and the network of worshipping communities.

Our forms of worship include: traditional services, a gathering for seniors, toddler church, a youth service, Café Church, Wild Church and Forest Church. As a result of the COVID pandemic a regular online congregation has developed using Zoom and online worship resources have also been extended. Other approaches to prayer and worship are developed as opportunities arise.

In 2023, c.2% of the local population was in a Lordsbridge church on an average Sunday and 3% attended a service (including mid-week services, baptisms and harvest celebrations) in any one week in October. Attendance at services in Advent, Christmas and other key festivals is much greater. Although the electoral roll has declined in recent years, the size of the Lordsbridge worshipping community has remained stable at approx. 420 (from 'Statistics for Mission' data).

In order to oversee Team-wide activities, there is a Team Council, comprising a lay representative from each parish and the members of the Core Ministry Team, which meets three times a year. This supports Team-wide vision setting, coordinates Ministry Share, employs the administrative staff, oversees youthwork, Team communications and other Team-wide projects. Each parish has its own PCC and its own finances, to support decision making at a local level.

Lordsbridge is part of the Bourn deanery which, as well as the Lordsbridge Team, consists of the Papworth Team Ministry and Cambourne Church, a four-way ecumenical partnership in a nearby new settlement. The Ven Hugh McCurdy, a retired archdeacon is our Rural Dean. The Rural Dean provides support for the Deanery Chapter and aids communication between the diocese and the parishes.

## 7. Our Ministry Team

Lordsbridge has an active and collaborative Core Ministry Team which operates around the principle of shared leadership, shared support, and shared accountability.

Following this appointment, the team will consist of three stipendiary clergy of incumbent status - a Team Rector and two Team Vicars – and a minister in secular employment as a fourth incumbent.

Our Team Administrator, and our Team Support Minister are also part of this Core Team.

The day-to-day functioning of the Lordsbridge Team is overseen by this Core Team who meet weekly to pray and plan tasks and activities.

The members of the Core Team and their parish responsibilities are as follows:

- Revd Clare Coates – Team Rector; Lead Minister in Caldecote with Childerley, Dry Drayton and Hardwick.
- Revd Claire Robertson – Team Vicar; Lead Minister for Barton, Coton, Harlton and Haslingfield.
- Revd Charles Fraser – Team Vicar (MSE); Lead Minister in Great Eversden and Little Eversden. Charles is also Head of Divinity at The Leys School in Cambridge.
- Revd Priscilla Slusar – Team Support Minister, PTO who works across the team
- Vacant – Team Vicar – Lead Minister in Comberton and Toft.
- Sue Squire - Team Administrator

There is a wider ministry team which consists of:

- Lordsbridge Team Chapter - We have a strong, committed wider team of self-supporting and retired clergy, and LLMs (Licensed Lay Ministers or Readers). Some of these have a peripatetic role and some serve in a specific local church ministry team.
- Local Ministry Teams – These meet at parish level and, as well as lay and ordained members of the Team Chapter, also include Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs), churchwardens and others. They function in different ways in different church communities depending on both the context and the mix of ministers and other roles serving within that church.
- Students - We offer attachments and placements to ordinands, curates and trainee lay ministers wanting to explore Team ministry and/or ministry and mission based in villages.

## 8. Administration

- The Team employs a Team Administrator, Sue Squire, working 15 hours a week providing administrative support for the Team Rector/Vicars, as well as for weddings, funerals, communications, and safeguarding. She is also the DBS Administrator across all the parishes.

## 9. Team-Wide Activities and Projects

Team-wide activities provide ways in which pooling resources can lead to outcomes that would not be possible at an individual parish level and opportunities to bind our parishes together for worship and shared events:

- **Supporting Prayer and Spirituality:** An annual Prayer Pilgrimage (now part of "Thy Kingdom Come") encourages congregation members prayerfully to visit other churches in the Team. Prayer stations and quiet mornings are held to offer the experience of (and demonstrate) a different way of nourishing our spiritual lives. We also offer Zoom Night Prayer.
- **Being a Training Benefice:** We have a good reputation both as a supportive environment for students for village-based Team ministry and as a place for innovative practices. Members of the wider ministry team are encouraged to contribute, for example, to thinking in pastoral theology and to the national conversation around sustainable rural Fresh Expressions of Church. The Team was part of a PhD study into the 'mixed ecology of church', started in 2021.
- **Developing Mission:** We have been exploring and implementing patterns of mission and ministry that reach beyond 'inherited' approaches to being church. We are also conscious of the need to respond to the edge of village developments taking place.
- **Resourcing Worship:** Final agreement for the allocation of ministers for Sunday services is made at Core Team level, so that any absences or other gaps are covered, and responsibility is shared. Worship resources created locally are made available for adaptation by colleagues via Dropbox. We also have a popular and well attended Zoom service, serving a congregation who find travel to a church difficult. We produce a weekly reflection based on the lectionary readings.
- **Administering Weddings and Funerals:** The Team Administrator organises weddings, including banns and invoicing, and couples have been invited to an annual Marriage Preparation event run by the incumbents. The Team Administrator is also responsible for much of the standard administration for funerals.

- **Communicating Team-Wide:** The Team Administrator updates the website regularly and a monthly newsletter is produced highlighting worship and social events across the Team.
- **Working with Young People:** We are a member of West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM), an organisation of local churches and youth workers, who run groups in the secondary school and sixth form, host a monthly area-wide youth service, an annual youth weekend and a summer camp.
- **Worshipping and Celebrating Together:** Fifth Sundays are Lordsbridge Sundays and we invite congregations to “worship with friends or make new ones” at a single service, where we take the opportunity to pool musical and other resources, and have some fun together, in choral, contemporary, or some other style. Ascension Day is a well-established occasion for shared evening worship. Once a year, working together with WCCYM, all the churches of the area gather for an area-wide multi-denominational celebration with an invited speaker.