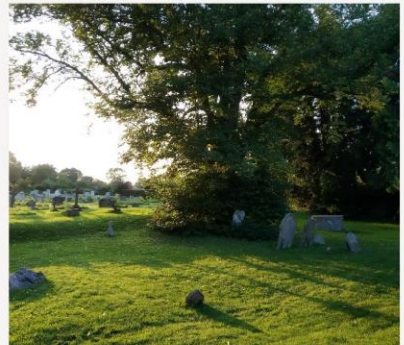


**ST ANDREW'S, WILMCOTE
WITH ALL SAINTS, BILLESLEY**

PARISH PROFILE





BISHOP'S INTRODUCTION

Jesus said: 'I have come that you might have life in all its fullness'. I hope these words of Jesus might resonate with you as you read this profile. There is much to celebrate and affirm in the life of the church family at St Andrew's as it seeks to worship God, make new disciples and transform communities. Through its distinctive Anglo-Catholic tradition and heritage, St Andrew's seeks to bear witness to the life and love of Christ in the heart of a beautifully situated rural village and its surroundings. Having developed close links with a thriving village community including the local school, St Andrew's is looking to extend the scope of its outreach with a desire to be outward looking, drawing on the best of its tradition, whilst also finding new ways to express and share the gospel afresh in each generation.

As you will see in the profile, longer term plans for pastoral re-organisation provide an exciting opportunity to strengthen links with the neighbouring parish of St Andrew's, Shottery, with strategic opportunities for missional outreach in a substantial new housing development which will border both parishes.

With friendly and engaged deanery colleagues, a prayerful and mission-minded House for Duty Minister with a willingness to minister collegially, would be part of a supportive and creative network. This would allow the new post-holder to release more of the potential for growth, both in depth and range of discipleship in this unique setting, within a diocese that is actively working towards restored health, new life and new growth across all the parishes it serves.

I commend this post to you for your prayerful consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a small cross symbol followed by the name 'Ruth' in a cursive script.

Bishop Ruth Worsley, Acting Bishop of Coventry



DEANERY SUMMARY

Wilmcote with Billesley falls within Alcester Deanery - a very beautiful part of rural Warwickshire with over 30 churches. Alcester, Studley, Bidford on Avon, and Henley in Arden are the largest population centres. We currently have a planned deployment of 6 full-time incumbents, and 3 House for Duty priests, supported by many helpful and valued retired clergy. Alcester Minster has been designated by Coventry Diocese as the Mission Hub church with a rural focus, and has an additional Associate Minister to support this initiative.

We can offer you a very warm, supportive Deanery Chapter where we enjoy good relationships, meet regularly for prayer, fellowship, and mutual support, and share a common heart for the growth and flourishing of the mission of our churches across our Deanery and beyond. All our recent appointments have been of clergy who enjoy working collegially.

Our hope is that the person appointed as Associate Minister of Wilmcote with Billesley (to be known as Minister in Charge of Wilmcote with Billesley) will strengthen our missional potential by building a fruitful relationship in ministry across the deanery boundary with the parish and ministers of the neighbouring parish of St Andrew's Shottery.

Reverend Kate Mier, Area Dean of Alcester



BACKGROUND TO POST

St Andrew's Church, Wilmcote, is virtually unique amongst the churches in Coventry Diocese. We hope our new priest will enjoy the challenge of helping this remarkable church to flourish, in our very lovely village.

Wilmcote has previously been linked with Aston Cantlow. The benefice is currently suspended whilst consultation regarding pastoral re-organisation takes place. We anticipate, and are in favour of, a new link with the neighbouring parish of Shottery in adjoining Fosse Deanery.

All Saints Billesley is redundant, and under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. This House for Duty post is therefore focussed around ministry in Wilmcote.

St Andrew's has a long Oxford Movement/Anglo-Catholic tradition. But at the same time it is the parish church of a small village. Most Anglo-Catholic churches are located in large towns or cities, and people who live in a city can choose where they go to church. But in Wilmcote there is only one church, and it is very distinctive. There may be many people in the village who might in principle be willing to come to church, but who would not necessarily gravitate to an Anglo-Catholic church. Accordingly, we believe it is profoundly important for St Andrew's, and our new priest, to be able to appeal to people from the village, as well as to committed Anglo-Catholics, working with us to encourage more people to be enriched by joining our worshipping community.

The village has traditionally been very generous in helping with church fund-raising events, and in attending and supporting them. There is considerable goodwill towards the church in the village. Our challenge is to encourage more people in our parish to participate in the life of the church.

Our previous parish priest, Fr David Benskin, came to us in early 2017, and has now retired. He took his farewell service on the 25th June, 2023, leading to this vacancy. This post is for a House for Duty Associate Minister of Wilmcote with Billesley to be known as Minister in Charge of Wilmcote with Billesley. We are very much looking forward to a new priest moving into the Vicarage and taking a full part in the life of our church and village.

ROLE SPECIFICATION

The role of this post is to lead St Andrew's, Wilmcote in fulfilling the Diocesan Mission Purposes of:

- Worshipping God
- Making New Disciples; and
- Transforming Communities.

St Andrew's, Wilmcote is fully committed to fulfilling these purposes.

We hope to attract more villagers to our lovely church, while continuing to look after the needs of our loyal existing congregation. We are looking for a priest who will help us to achieve this, honouring our very distinctive heritage.

VISION & PRIORITIES FOR GROWTH

Our vision is to see people of all ages in our community drawn into a closer relationship with God and one another.

Our priorities for growth are:

- developing outreach to children and families through existing links with our school and other initiatives
- drawing on our Anglo-Catholic tradition and other approaches to encourage people to explore Christian faith and to continue in active discipleship
- strengthening links with the nearby parish of Shottery to develop our missional potential and to facilitate further pastoral re-organisation

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for someone who will:

- develop stronger missional links between the church and the community
- nurture creative ways of engaging with children and young families, including through ministry in the local school
- live in the vicarage and play an active part in the life of the village
- be respectful of our Anglo-Catholic heritage, making these traditions relevant and accessible to a wider range of people
- be an adaptable and pastorally sensitive leader, managing change effectively
- nurture, empower and equip new lay leaders to develop our mission and ministry
- build a strategic and fruitful relationship with the neighbouring parish of St Andrew's Shottery to strengthen our missional potential

WHAT IS OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY LIKE?

Our Church's Early History

St Andrew's was dedicated on St Martin's Day, the 11th November, 1841. From the very earliest times it has been associated with the Oxford Movement and the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church. For many years the belief within the village was that all the early leaders of the Oxford Movement – Newman, Keble, Pusey, and Henry (later Cardinal) Manning – had visited St Andrew's, and that the greatest yew trees in the churchyard had been planted by Newman and Manning respectively. This belief may be incorrect – but there certainly were connections with Newman and Manning.

Edward Fortescue, our first priest, established a very elaborate, "high" liturgy at St Andrew's, including even a village choir singing Gregorian chant. Subsequent priests have carried on these Anglo-Catholic traditions through to the present day.

Inspiring Worship

We have a long tradition of Anglo-Catholic worship. Every Sunday (except for the first Sunday of the month, when we have a more informal Family Communion Service), we have a full sung Eucharist. Our priest wears a chasuble. There are a frontal and superfrontal on the altar. Our male servers wear cottas over cassocks and our lady servers wear albs. We use incense, candles and bells. We usually have an organist for this service, but have not had a choir for many years. We have recently acquired a "Hymnal Plus Box", to provide music when our organist is unavailable.

Our regular congregation appreciates this form of service. Some of our congregation come to Wilmcote from Stratford, Alcester, and even as far afield as Redditch. Many of them do so because of our ritual, as well as the warm friendship and mutual support which members of the congregation give each other. The use of incense is more welcome to some than to others.

There is a great sense of spirituality in our church building in itself. Some people have expressed a consciousness that generations of people have been praying in St Andrew's. They feel the atmosphere of those prayers still lingers in the church, with people commenting in our Visitor's Book about the church's air of peace and tranquillity.

There is a retired female priest in the parish – the Revd. Fritha Middlemiss. St Andrew's is her designated parish. She has Permission to Officiate, and is a co-opted member of the PCC. She sometimes takes Sunday services and occasional offices for us. She is a Foundation Governor of the school.

We used to have a flourishing congregation for our said Communion (Book of Common Prayer) service at 8.0 a.m. each Sunday morning. Unfortunately, the advancing age of our congregation, and then the pandemic, have meant we are not currently able to hold these services. If we decided to start them up again, we would probably have to try to build up a completely new congregation.

During Holy Week we try to hold services every day except for Monday, including Benediction on Tuesday. We also try to celebrate the feasts of the principal saints – normally with a said Eucharist (Common Worship) at 10.0 a.m.

Our Leaders

We have some very faithful lay leaders, who do their best to keep the church running smoothly. Most of the administrative work is dealt with by our churchwarden and our PCC secretary/treasurer. We have a loyal and committed PCC. We also have a number of “teams”, which all help to run our church. These include our serving team, our readers and intercessors, and our cleaners and flower arrangers. Our team members and PCC trust each other and work well together. With the Eucharist being at the heart of our worship, our services are generally led by a priest, though we seek to develop lay leadership in other areas.

Most of our leaders and team members are in more advanced years. The running of the church devolves to a small group of long-standing and faithful people. We recognise the need to safely recruit more leaders, PCC and team members, providing the necessary encouragement and training. We hope that our new parish priest will help to identify, nurture and empower new leaders over time.

Our PCC is faithful and diligent, but only one of its members is young. At present we do not have a Deanery Synod representative. Our serving team is made up of four faithful members, two of whom are well into their 80s.

We have an able and supportive Parish Safeguarding Officer, who is a member of our PCC, and also of our serving team. She has been appointed in accordance with guidelines for safer recruitment and is now using the Safeguarding Dashboard to help us get fully up-to-date with training requirements.

Supporting Each Other

St Andrew’s is generally a loving and happy church, and its members take good care of each other. Many members of our congregation have lived in Wilmcote for many years (if not their whole lives!), and many of them are close personal friends. We also seek to be outward looking, readily welcoming and befriending new people.

Our Links with our Community

We are particularly keen to foster relationships with children and families in our community. We have long-standing connections with the Voluntary Aided primary school which is next door to us (see below for further information). We also support “St Andrew’s Minnows”, for pre-school children and their parents, every Monday morning. We would also see festivals such as Harvest Sunday, Remembrance Sunday and Plough Sunday as an opportunity to connect with children and families, as was previously the case when Cubs and Beavers were operating in the village.

We recognise that effective Christian outreach is an area we need to develop. We look forward to working with our new priest to strengthen our links with our village and develop ways of sharing our faith in a sensitive and relevant way.

Our Ecumenical Links

We have no formal links with other churches in the area. However, there are friendly informal relations with St Andrew’s Church, Shottery. In recent years several members of our congregation have gone on pilgrimage to Walsingham with members of St Andrew’s. In addition, the clergy of the two churches helped us form a Ward (that is, a local branch) of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, for members of both churches and for anyone else who cherishes Anglo-Catholic traditions. The members have celebrated the Eucharist and Benediction together from time to time. However, we do not know whether our Ward will be carrying on in the future. Our most recent meeting was on the 9th July, 2022.

WHAT IS OUR VILLAGE LIKE?

Location

Wilmcote is located about three miles north of Stratford upon Avon, an extremely popular tourist destination which is very well known as the birthplace of William Shakespeare.

Until recently, Wilmcote itself was also an extremely popular tourist destination, by virtue of Mary Arden's House and Farm (the home of Shakespeare's mother). During the year Mary Arden's was open to visitors and traditionally offered specialist attractions including Apple Day; and there have also been open-air theatrical performances every summer – including wonderful Shakespeare parodies from Oddsocks Productions. Unfortunately, Mary Arden's had to close when the pandemic struck, and it has not yet fully re-opened, although it is now providing outdoor educational facilities for primary schools.

There is a regular open-topped bus service to bring tourists from Stratford to Mary Arden's House and back. Wilmcote also has a train station, served by trains from Stratford to Birmingham and Leamington Spa, with occasional direct services to London and connections to many other destinations. Wilmcote is also on the Stratford – Birmingham canal, and sometimes people who are taking narrowboat holidays on this canal come and visit our church.

Population and Village Life

The parish encompasses the village of Wilmcote, together with small communities at Pathlow and Billesley and falls in a Green Belt area. In the 2021 Census, Wilmcote's population was 1,171 with 560 dwellings. The majority of the population falls in the age range 18 – 64 with 33% aged 65 or over. The demographic is predominantly white British with 63% describing themselves as Christian, 36% of no religion and a small number belonging to other faith traditions.

Results from a 2015 neighbourhood plan survey can be found at <http://www.wilmcotepc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Wilmcote-Pathlow-NP-Survey-Results-Final-Report-20151.pdf>. St Andrew's, and its importance to the village, featured in the section on village amenities.

Wilmcote has a very active local shop with a mobile Post Office visiting on a daily basis. The nearest doctors, dentists, and veterinary surgeries are in Stratford, Alcester, and Henley in Arden. There is a community hospital at Stratford, and the nearest General Hospital is in Warwick.

For its size, Wilmcote has an immense range of activities with a vibrant and active community. The principal meeting places are the Village Hall, the Sports and Social Club and The Mary Arden Inn.

Regular activities at the Village Hall include the following:

- St Andrew's Minnows – this is a stay-and-play session for carers and pre-school children, every Monday morning; it is managed by volunteers.
- Wilmcote Players – a group of amateur thespians from across the village who put on shows at the Village Hall and, as needed, elsewhere in the village. Pre-Covid the players would put on biennial pantomimes and cabaret evenings, raising funds for the village hall and other charities.
- Good Companions – a local women's group that meets every month, with guest speakers.
- Historical Society – this local history group meets bi-monthly.
- Other regular groups include an Art Club, Zumba fitness sessions and a new luncheon club called the Lunch Bunch.
- The Village Hall committee organise fundraising activities throughout the year – quizzes, coffee mornings, a beer festival, big breakfasts and some evening entertainment nights.
- The PCC have held social events and fundraisers for church funds in the village hall. These have included jumble sales, musical evenings with meals, Christmas and summer fayres, games nights and Harvest lunches.

The village also benefits from a very popular children's playground, developed and funded on the initiative of a team of enthusiastic mums. The Social Club hosts a range of activities and evening entertainments. The Mary Arden Inn runs a coffee shop serving breakfast, lunch and cakes.

There is a Travellers' site at Pathlow. The children from that site normally attend Wilmcote School. This group also looks to St Andrew's for occasional offices such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

Wilmcote is blessed with some amazing walks, not only along the canal path but also through the lovely countryside connecting nearby Aston Cantlow, Billesley, Newnham and Pathlow.

Our School

Wilmcote C of E (VA) Primary is a small village school with strong links with the community and church.

The school is situated on a small site, next door to St. Andrew's Church. The original building is over 175 years old, and was built by the distinguished architect William

Butterfield. Over the past few years, and with generous help from the Diocesan Board of Education and the Parents' Association, the school has undergone an intensive refurbishment programme, which has created bright modern classrooms.

Wilmcote C of E (VA) Primary School is part of the Stratford Rural Schools Federation, together with Loxley C of E Primary School and Snitterfield Community Primary School. The present Head of School is Mrs Anita Twyman. The school may shortly be transferring from the Federation to the Stour Federation Multi Academy Trust.

For more information about Wilmcote Primary School please visit the school's website,

<http://www.wilmcoteprimary.org.uk/>

Our Links with our School

The school is located right next to the church. Before the pandemic, the school and the church joined together to provide a variety of child centred activities. Covid brought these to a premature conclusion.

The current Head of School is very keen to re-establish and further develop these links. Fr David used to hold services for the pupils in church for specific festivals, as well as providing support within the school. He was a member of the governing body, and our retired female priest, the Revd. Fritha Middlemiss, is a foundation governor. A Bible is presented to each school leaver at the end of the school year.

Our Head of School has written this, about our church's relationship with the school:

“Our school is physically and spiritually close to Saint Andrew's Church in Wilmcote.

“As an inclusive Christian school, Wilmcote Church of England (VA) Primary School values everyone as a child of God and we strive to provide a safe, Christian learning environment that enables our children to develop to their full potential intellectually, physically, creatively, socially and emotionally.

“Our school community of children and their families, staff and members of the wider village community enjoy and look forward to church services when we are all together in the beautiful church of St Andrew's, Wilmcote. The school also welcomes regular visits from the priest in charge to lead or take part in assemblies and events throughout the school year, which always promotes lively and thoughtful discussions between the children.”



Our Church Buildings

There are two churches in the parish: All Saints Church, Billesley, and St Andrew's, Wilmcote, itself.

All Saints is redundant, and under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, which sees to its maintenance. The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard, and is aided by a small voluntary group.

St Andrew's was built in 1841, and is a listed building (Grade 2). For the most part, it is constructed of Wilmcote stone (blue lias stone), with limestone ashlar dressings, and the roof is covered in tiles (there is no external metal). The church is relatively small – its seating capacity is not much more than 100. The church has a raised sanctuary with fixed stone altar, chancel, nave, fixed pews, a small upper vestry, a larger lower vestry, a porch at the west end, and an organ gallery above the porch. We also have a toilet, connected to the mains, in a separate "Arch" building, to the side of the church.

We recently had our Quinquennial Inspection (February, 2022). The QI Report does not reveal any substantial structural problems. A number of the specified works have now been carried out; the main work remaining to be done relates to relatively minor areas of damage to the exterior stonework, and some necessary repairs to some of our leaded lights.

We have a gardener who maintains the churchyard well. It is an open churchyard and can remain so for burials, and interments of ashes, for some time to come. We have an excellent, up-to-date plan showing the burials and interments of ashes in our Garden of Remembrance.

Our Legal Status

Our Patron is the Society for the Maintenance of the Faith, of Pusey House, Oxford. However, the living has been suspended for some time.

The benefice arrangement with Aston Cantlow is currently suspended. The plan is for Wilmcote to become more closely associated with St Andrew's Shottery, particularly with the development of a new housing estate between the two parishes.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is situated in a secluded, wooded area behind Wilmcote School, about two minutes' walk away from St Andrew's, and about five minutes' walk from the village shop.

It is a modern detached property, completed in 1978. It is accessed via a long, shared drive which leads to the old and new vicarages (the Old Vicarage is now a private house).

There is ample parking at the front, and a detached garage at the right. Most of the secluded garden lies to the south and west, and there are views over open fields to the rear of the property.

The front door opens onto a large hall, which provides access to the lounge, dining room, study, and kitchen – all large, well-proportioned rooms – and the downstairs cloakrooms.

A hardwood dogleg staircase leads up to the first floor, where there are four well-proportioned bedrooms and the main bathroom.

The Vicarage is double glazed and carpeted throughout, and has central heating and an open fire in the lounge.

See pictures on the following page.



Administration

Parish administration is currently undertaken by our churchwarden and PCC members using their own equipment. We do not currently have a website, though there is the potential to raise the profile of the church on the Wilmcote Parish Council website.

There is a village magazine, the *Village Vine*, for the two villages of Wilmcote and Aston Cantlow, which is published every month except January. We always publish details of next month's services in the *Vine*, together with any other notices relating to St Andrew's.

Attendance

Our attendance during the years 2018 – 2022, as recorded in the C of E's Online Parish Return System, was as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Electoral Roll	52	54	52	53	54
Non-residents in above	12	12	12	13	16
Average Adult Attendance	28	30	27	23	27
Worshipping Community	55	38	35	37	39
Over – 70s in above	35	25	27	25	27
Baptisms	5	2	0	0	0
Weddings	1	1	0	2	1
Funerals in Church	4	8	2	3	3
Funerals at Crematorium	5	5	3	2	5

Notes: 1. The C of E did not ask for full-year attendance figures for 2020 and 2021, because of the lengthy lockdowns. It did ask for details of attendance during October each year, and the above figures represent the average attendance during October in those two years.

2. Clearly, the number in the worshipping community was calculated on a different basis in 2018, compared to the other years.

Finances

Summaries of our PCC accounts for the past five calendar years are shown below:

PCC Receipts	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Planned Giving	10,861	10,131	10,563	12,278	14,725
Gift Aid	4,542	3,315	4,400	2,863	4,767
Loose Collections	2,229	2,122	869	962	925
Fees	1,972	3,342	1,199	2,584	1,920
Other Receipts	1,291	840	1,116	1,632	352
Total:	20,895	19,750	18,147	20,319	22,689
PCC Expenses					
Parish Share	12,600	12,760	12,760	12,760	13,250
Running Expenses	7,342	7,577	6,792	7,849	8,641
Total:	19,942	20,337	19,552	20,609	21,891
Year-end Reserves					
Unrestricted (PCC)	24,845	24,257	22,852	22,562	23,375
Restricted (Wardens' Funds)	26,350	29,244	27,060	22,812	20,212
Total:	51,195	53,501	49,912	45,374	43,588

Our congregation are very loyal and very generous. We recently began using the Parish Giving Scheme, and most members of the congregation now support us either through the PGS or else by means of monthly standing orders. But (as is no doubt the case for many churches!) our finances are precarious. Nearly 30% of our total income comes from two donors: if we lost either of them, we would have significant problems.

In addition to the above figures, we also try to do as much fund-raising as we can; this is normally done for the benefit of our Churchwardens' account (to help to pay for the maintenance of the church and churchyard), rather than for the PCC account. We raised £2,424 in 2018, and £3,261 in 2019. Our fund-raising activities had to be curtailed during the pandemic, but we did raise £1,865 during 2021, and £2,608 during 2022.

We agree our Parish Share with the Alcester Deanery Finance Committee each year, and thus far we have always been able to pay our agreed Parish Share in full. We paid £13,250 in 2022, and we expect to pay the same amount in 2023, and hopefully in 2024 as well.

Copies of the full accounts, for the PCC and also for the churchwardens' accounts (which are used primarily to fund maintenance of the church and churchyard) can be provided on request.

HOW TO APPLY

For informal conversations about the post please contact:

Area Dean, the Revd. Kate Mier, on 01527-852830
(Email: rector@ardenmarches.co.uk)

or

Acting Associate Archdeacon, the Revd. Gail Phillip, on 07983-300675
(Email: gail.phillip@coventry.anglican.org)

For further details and an application form please contact:

Debbie Niblett
Mission and Discipleship Team Administrator
Tel: 07943 314739
(Email: mailto:debbie.niblett@coventry.anglican.org)

An application form can be downloaded from the Diocesan Website:
http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/vacancies/current_vacancies

Enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post.