

UPPER CULM VALLEY MISSION COMMUNITY PROFILE 2025



Mission Statement:

A community of faith, hospitality and inspiration, loving God and loving our neighbour

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Note: Throughout this document the abbreviation “MC” denotes “Mission Community”

(Front page picture: Culmstock Beacon)



View of part of Clayhidon

Archdeacon's Foreword



Welcome, and thank you for your interest in this post.

This post presents a rare opportunity to minister in a beautiful part of Mid Devon on the Devon-Somerset border. These small rural parishes are centred around the larger community of Heymock. Whilst deeply rural, they are only a short drive from the M5 and major rail routes.

We are seeking a priest with a heart for pastoral care and a desire to further mission and ministry. You will be working with a group of parishes seeking to grow in faith and discipleship. We would hope that the right candidate will bring enthusiasm, energy and innovation to this role of Rector and lead the parishes into a more sustainable future.

The **Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison** was made **Bishop of Exeter** in November 2024 and, since his arrival, has been developing the Diocesan Vision. +Mike says:



"The Diocese of Exeter's vision to grow in prayer, make new disciples and serve the people of Devon with joy has evolved over the last five years, with a widespread post-pandemic listening consultation leading to the development of the 'Next Steps' strategy to support mission communities to flourish and be sustainable for generations to come. It's a vision that fits with Jesus' commission in Mt.28.16-20, which is authoritative for me and I'm sure for many.

*Putting flesh on the bones of the vision, I would like to articulate five particular priorities for this next season of our life together. First, **Missional Leadership**: equipping and resourcing the ordained and lay leaders of our Christian communities as best as we can to develop disciples and make new*

*disciples. Second, developing a "**Missional DNA**" across our Christian communities, encouraging outward-looking, invitational churches, hospitable to outsiders and engaged with their wider communities. Third, cultivating an intentional **Vocational Culture** so that we are not asking hether God is calling me/us, but "To what is God calling me/us now?" Fourth, **Children & Young People** being placed at the heart of our life, mission and ministry. And fifth, a **Mixed Ecology**: understanding that we need different ways of doing and being Church. Alongside time-honoured Church we need all sorts of Christian communities which can engage with the 95% of our population who are as yet unengaged. I hope that these five priorities will become embedded at every level of our ministry going forward."*



Further information regarding our Diocesan Vision can be found at <https://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy/>

Living in Mission Communities

Our strategy centres on Mission Communities - parishes working together to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively in Devon. The phrase Mission Communities sums up what we need to be as a Church in the 21st century: **mission-orientated, community-focused, and locally-rooted.**

Deanery & Diocese

The Upper Culm Valley Mission Community lies in the Archdeaconry of Exeter, and so under the care of the Bishop of The Benefice is part of the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery, of which Andy Humm is the Rural Dean.



We aim to be a diverse and truly representative diocese, and particularly welcome applications from women and those from black and minority ethnic groups. Not only is Devon a beautiful place to call home, but we believe the Diocese of Exeter is a great community of which to be a part.

You are warmly invited to contact me directly if you would like a confidential conversation about the post.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Diocese.

Andrew

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The Area

The Upper Culm Valley Group of Churches is situated on the west end of the Blackdown Hills, close to the Devon/Somerset border, around 5 miles south of Wellington and 12 miles south-west of Taunton.

The Mission Community consists of three individual parishes, covering over 22 sq. miles, with a total population of 3781. Each parish has its own church, one also has a separate chapel:

- Hemyock, including Culm Davy Chapel (9.22 sq. miles/population of 2290)
- Clayhidon (7.39 sq. miles/population of 508)
- Culmstock (5.71 sq. miles/population of 983)

Hemyock, where the Rectory is conveniently situated, is the geographical centre of the group.

Both Hemyock and Clayhidon churches have their own church rooms close by and all three parishes have larger independent parish/village halls within easy reach.

The Upper Culm Valley area is predominantly farming country, principally livestock based though with some arable also. There is also some light industry and other small businesses. Some people commute into Wellington, Taunton and other nearby towns to work. There is a significant population of retirees.

The regional centre of Taunton, with its shopping facilities, theatre, hospital, cricket ground and other attractions is around 12 miles from the parishes within the MC.

The nearest other towns are Wellington, Tiverton, Cullompton and Honiton. A good range of shops, restaurants, pubs and other local facilities including hotels can be found amongst them. Exeter and Bristol are both

easily accessible via the M5 or railway.

There are pre-schools and primary schools in both Hemyock and Culmstock, rated by Ofsted as “Good”. None of these are church schools but enjoy good relations with their respective churches – see below.

There is a highly regarded secondary academy in nearby Uffculme which is rated by Ofsted as “Outstanding”.

There are other state and independent schools in Wellington, Tiverton and Taunton. The latter also has a large campus of the Bridgwater and Taunton College.

Doctors’ surgeries are located in Hemyock, Churchinford, Dunkeswell and Uffculme, whilst main hospitals are in Taunton and Exeter and community hospitals in Wellington and Tiverton.

The Blackdown Support Group offers a range of community, health and transport services for those in need.

The villages are connected with narrow country lanes, often single track and with steep hills.

Long distance communications are good with junctions 26 and 27 of the M5 within a few miles to the north/west and the A303 to the south. The main railway lines connecting to Bristol, London Paddington and the southwest are accessible at Taunton and Tiverton Parkway. Bristol and Exeter both have international airports serving British and European destinations.

Our Vision

While there are many positive and encouraging aspects at present, we all recognise that a new appointment brings an exciting opportunity for the mission and work of the group to develop in new ways, and to be more effective in fulfilling our own group vision to deepen our understanding of God's love, to grow in our commitment to Jesus Christ and communicate this more effectively within our communities.

The most recent mission Action Plan was agreed in 2021, with the Mission Statement “A community of faith, hospitality and inspiration, loving God and loving our neighbour”.

We have identified the following values and assets underpinning our Churches and Mission Community:-

1. Caring
2. Community – there are numerous clubs and organisations across our Benefice, some of which can be found here: [Hemyock - A Village on the Blackdown Hills](#)
3. Creative outreach
4. Ecumenical partnerships
5. Hospitable
6. Inclusive
7. Growing in prayer and fellowship
8. Diverse in our forms of worship; café church, Iona worship, Compline etc
9. Pastoral care team who predominantly work with older people
10. Children and families work
11. Open for all ages - Intergenerational worship.
12. Holiday club held with the Baptist Church in Hemyock for the local primary school aged children – has been running for over 50 years.
13. Love of music, which forms a large part of our worship.
14. Conscious of the beauty of our surrounding countryside and looking at how we can become more sustainable
15. Lots of volunteers from inside and outside the church community

Introduction to the Mission Community

The Upper Culm Valley MC has been united since 1991. Full details about the individual parishes can be found on pages 14 to 24.

Each of the 3 parishes maintains its own Parochial Church Council (PCC), chaired by the Rector, to administer their individual affairs. There are meetings of the churchwardens of the 3 parishes with the Rector, Ministry Team and the Parish Administrator when joint discussions are required.

The Upper Culm Valley presents all the opportunities and challenges of “being church” in a rural context including:

- High levels of commitment from key members of individual churches
- Established Ministry Team
- Life and worship in an environment which speaks clearly of God’s beauty in creation
- There is a good relationship of mutual support from non-church organisations within the community
- The scattered and isolated nature of some communities, individuals and families, particularly those involved in farming and other rural industries



The last Incumbent retired in January 2025, having served the parishes for just over 5 years. Working together is well-established, providing a sound foundation upon which the new appointee can build.

Services and other activities are currently arranged on a MC-wide basis, with a regular rotation of services in individual churches together with regular whole-MC events including Benefice Holy Communion services. Some people also regularly attend services and events outside their own parish, including meetings for Bible study etc.



The “Parish Pump” in Hemyock



Christmas lights at St Mary’s, Hemyock

Introduction to the Mission Community

A typical rota for regular services each month is as follows:

Week 1:

- 9.00am Holy Communion (BCP) at Culm Davy Chapel
- 10:00am Parish Communion (CW) at Culmstock
- 11:00am Morning Worship/Café Church at Hemyock

Week 2:

- 10:00am Parish Communion (CW) at Clayhidon
- 10.00am Morning Worship at Culmstock
- 11.00am Parish Communion (CW) at Hemyock
- 6:00pm Evening Prayer (BCP)/Compline at Culmstock

Week 3:

- 10.00am Morning Worship (CW) at Clayhidon
- 10.00am Parish Communion (CW) at Culmstock
- 11.00am Morning Worship at Hemyock
- 3.30pm Evening Prayer (BCP) at Culm Davy Chapel

Week 4:

- 10:00am Holy Communion (CW) at Clayhidon
- 10.00am Morning Worship at Culmstock
- 11:00am Holy Communion (CW) at Hemyock

Week 5:

- 10.30am Whole MC Holy Communion by rotation in each of the parishes

Whole MC Holy Communion services are also held at patronal and some other festivals

This extensive rota of services is generally being maintained during the vacancy, and to date this has been possible as a result of the kind assistance of retired and other clergy, plus our 4 local Readers, who have been willing to help with both regular services and Occasional Offices.

Introduction to the Mission Community

Mission Community Administrator

The Mission Community has a part-time paid administrator nominally for 8 hours per week, but the current administrator is flexible and willing to support the new appointment as required.

The administrator normally works from home using her own facilities, and is able to produce material as required, such as service schedules, posters, fortnightly newsletter and service sheets.

The Administrator currently undertakes the following tasks:

- Being the first point of contact for enquiries about any Mission Community matters – particularly in the absence of an incumbent
- Finding clergy to cover services when necessary
- Arranging weddings, baptisms and funerals
- Administration of fees and expenses, in liaison with the treasurers of the churches
- Responsibility for building and maintaining the Mission Community's website
- Social media content on the UCVMC Facebook page
- Assisting with the advertising of events and services across the Benefice
- General administration for the MC in support of the Incumbent and Ministry Team



Parish Magazines

Two magazines cover the parishes within the MC as follows:

- **Parish Pump** – bi-monthly and distributed to all houses in Hemyock, Culm Davy and Clayhidon; produced by St. Mary's Church and financed by donations and advertising. It is also available in Culmstock church. It always contains a leading article from the incumbent or another member of the Ministry Team and details of services, activities and news as well as a wide range of information about the wider life of the communities it serves.
- **Culmstock News** – again bi-monthly and distributed to all houses in Culmstock; produced independently and financed by advertising. The editor includes the same Clergy/Ministry Team article and calendar of church services as appears in the Parish Pump for Hemyock and Clayhidon, as well as one-off church notices and contributions.

Introduction to the Mission Community

Witness in the Community

There are a number of ways in which the MC are involved with other organisations etc:

- “Open the book” assembly at both primary schools
- Support for Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Rainbows etc.
- Joint services with Hemyock Baptist Church & Rosemary Lane Chapel
- Regular coffee shops in aid of charity
- Use of church buildings for concerts etc.
- Helping with “Blackdown Support Group”
- Churchyard schemes e.g. raised beds kept by the Hemyock primary school children
- Regular school services in church

Example of a special event

The Bishop of Exeter took part in a special service at St Mary’s Hemyock to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Young Farmers’ Club. It was formed in 1921 as The Calf Club to develop the interest and skills of local young people in farming. The Calf Club then grew into what is now the world-wide Young Farmers’ Movement.



Two young calves were present at the service, safely in a pen at the front of church.

Members of the village had made 19 giant calf lanterns, some of which were on display in the church. They were the centrepiece of the village’s annual December light parade, which was in honour of the Calf Club and Young Farmers’ centenary.

Introduction to the Mission Community

Witness in the Community



The then Bishop of Exeter, the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, spoke passionately of the importance of Young Farmers in the British Food Industry. After the service he hosted a question and answer session with the congregation, very many of whom were either young or older farmers from the area, and commented, 'I'm delighted to be at this centenary where we celebrate a new generation of farmers.' Bishop Robert said churches can help support their local community by getting to know the farmers in their area and talking with them to understand the challenges that they are facing including 'the challenges that come with leaving the European Union and the challenges in trying to reduce our carbon footprint... We are asking our young farmers not simply to be producing food, we are asking them also to be carers of our environment too and these are big asks.'

Schools and Church Collaboration

We have close links with the two primary schools within the Upper Culm Valley Mission Community, Culmstock Primary School and Hemyock Primary School. The Open the Book team attend both schools for regular assemblies and both schools attend their respective churches for Christingle services, carol services and harvest festival services, as well as at other times throughout the year.



Introduction to the Mission Community

Witness in the Community

Schools and Church Collaboration continued

In 2024 a new initiative between Culmstock Primary School and All Saints church, Culmstock and Hemyock Primary School and St Mary's church, Hemyock commenced, working together to explore, develop and enhance the churchyards for the enjoyment of everyone. Raised flowerbeds were built in both churchyards and the school children planted flowers and shrubs in the raised beds. Children from both schools continue to regularly attend the churchyards, as part of their outdoor learning activities.



The children at Hemyock Primary school were recently asked what kind of Rector they would like and they responded as follows:-

Boy aged 10 - We would like a Rector who is kind, caring and thoughtful.

Girl Aged 11 - We would like a Rector who shares stories about God in a fun way.

Boys aged 5 - I want a Rector who can show us the church

Girl aged 4 - I want someone who gives us sweets (Christingles)

Girl aged 7 - We love the assemblies as they are funny, and our friends do the acting.

Boys aged 6 - I love gardening at the church because we get to pull up all the weeds.

Girl aged 6 - We have made pretty gardens at the church; I look at it with my mummy when we go walking.

The Rectory

The 5 bedroomed Rectory is situated in Cornhill, Hemyock (EX15 3RQ), a few minutes' walk from St. Mary's Church. The property underwent a full internal renovation in 2019 and is in very good decorative order. The outside was fully redecorated during the Autumn of 2024.

The ground floor consists of lounge, dining room, breakfast room, study, cloakroom, kitchen and utility area.

On the first floor there are five bedrooms (3 double, 2 single). The bathroom includes bath, separate shower, wash hand basin, WC and full height heated towel rail.

There is oil-fired central heating and uPVC double glazing.

The Rectory is surrounded by a large mature garden on all sides and has a garage. More information available on request.



The Role

What is the role?

An ordained Rector in the Church of England who, as the Rector of our three parishes, will make a real difference within our communities and, together with us, work towards achieving our vision.

Could this be you?

If you are someone who:

- Can communicate a living faith, firmly based on scripture and a biblical understanding
- Can lead with energy and inspiration
- Can continue to strengthen the growing bonds between the churches of the Mission Community, whilst maintaining respect for the differences of each of the churches
- Is open to fresh ways of drawing people into church, including new forms of worship, whilst sensitive to the value of traditional worship
- Has proven experience of developing ministry to families, young people and children whilst nurturing the existing congregations, many of whom are older and some housebound
- Is warm, welcoming and empathetic
- Has good time-management skills
- Enjoys living and working in a rural and village context
- Will establish a visible presence within the various local communities by developing individual relationships with those on the periphery of the churches.
- Communicates clearly and motivates people when leading a team
- Is willing to work with a team of committed retired clergy and licenced lay ministers.

You could be the next Rector of the Upper Culm Valley Mission community!



*Rehearsal for Music Sunday at St Mary's
Hemyock, June 2024*



Lent Walk

The Role

What are the essentials?

You must:

- Be an ordained priest of the Church of England
- At least three years' experience of ordained parish ministry.
- IT skills, including a sound working knowledge of a word-processing package, email and using the internet safely and appropriately
- Have access to your own transport and be willing to travel as required (full expenses will be reimbursed)

What support will you have?

We are excited about welcoming a new Rector to lead us in the next phase of the ministry of our churches, and very much hope that this will be a medium to long term relationship. We are committed to providing a warm welcome and supporting the new appointee, recognising that this is especially important in rural multi-parish ministry.

You will be able to depend on strong support from:

- The churchwardens and PCCs of all three parishes
- MC Administrator
- Ministry team
- Our 4 licensed lay ministers
- Retired clergy who assist with a range of services
- The congregations of the churches

How do you apply?

An application pack is available from:

The Archdeacon of Exeter's Office
Emmanuel House, Station Road, Ide,
Exeter EX2 9RS

Tel: 01392 425577 Email: archdeacon.of.exeter@exeter.anglican.org

Welcome from Our Parishes

The following pages contain individual parish statements from each of the three parishes within the MC.

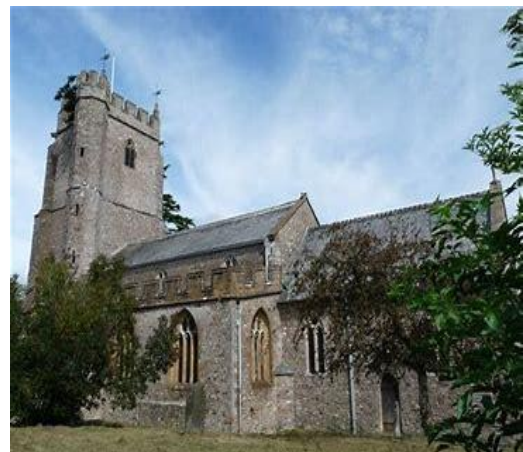
These individual statements have been compiled by the local churchwardens and PCCs, and so reflect the diversity across the different congregations, as well as shared values and vision.

Hemyock..... [Page 15](#)

Culm Davy [Page 18](#)

Clayhidon [Page 20](#)

Culmstock [Page 22](#)



Welcome from Our Parishes

St Mary's Church, Hemyock

Parish Population - 2290 (including Culm Davy)

Village Website - <https://hemyock.org/>

Electoral Roll - 50 (including Culm Davy Chapel)

Average Sunday attendance - 37

Short Description

Hemyock lies in the Culm Valley at the crossing point of the road down the valley from Clayhidon to Culmstock, with the road from Honiton in the south to Wellington in the north and close to the M5

For many years it has had farming at its heart. The Culm Valley Dairy factory stood by the river for over 100 years, latterly making St Ivel Gold. Young Farmers' Clubs originated here and still today agriculture is a component of village life.

With the closure of the factory and its railway connection the village has changed; some light industry has come in, there are a lot of small enterprises and where once milk churns were washed, we now have the Blackdown Healthy Living and Activity Centre providing a range of services.

After being fairly static for many years, with families here for 5, 6, 7 generations, the village population has grown rapidly of late. The population figure in 2019 was 2290, which was about 130 more than in 2011. The figure will have grown further in the last 5 years due to the development of a new housing estate next to the cemetery. Many of the newcomers are retirees. The village has maintained its vitality with a whole range of activities from sports clubs to music, drama, and history groups and much more. There are facilities for teenage children (Youth Club, Scouts) at the Garages, Lower Millhayes. There is a lot of social care from several quarters; the surgery and the Blackdown Support group, the Riverside Club for the elderly, and activities carried out by the Parish and Baptist Churches.

Village Activities

There are 60/70 groups within the village ranging from football, tennis, bowls, snooker, musical groups, art classes, young farmers, book club, whist-drive, scouts, cubs, beavers, squirrels and many more.

There is a good primary school, PO and Stores, Spar shop, 4 hairdressers, garage (no petrol), bus service, Redwoods coaches and beauty salons.



Welcome from Our Parishes

St Mary's Church, Hemyock continued

The Church

Dating from about 1120 St Mary's is a church which has been altered in every generation. Originally cruciform in shape with the tower centrally placed, today as seen it is more or less as "improved" by the Victorians, but with fewer pews and more circulation space; plus, a screen between the nave and ringing room. Among its hidden gems are the font which is part Norman, the clock, the candelabra and the former chantry chapel, along with three of the Norman arches. The church also has a toilet and the north aisle has been reordered to form a community area, including a children's corner, funded by the community and various grants including from Viridor Credits. The tower contains 6 bells which are regularly rung by the MC ringing team.



St Georges Day Service

We have a good-sized church room which is used for the charity shop, coffee shop, lunches, meetings, and is available for private hire,

Its regular congregation whilst faithful and hardworking, is ageing. Most are over 50.

We have a robed choir, and the choir is a member of the RSCM.

Worship and Mission

As shown elsewhere there is a variety of services each month at Hemyock including Holy Communion, Morning Prayer and All-Age services. There is also Café church (held quarterly), Christingle, Crib service and Carols in the Churchyard, Mothering Sunday, Harvest etc. Other services included Remembrance Sunday, St Georges Day Parade and Service run by the uniformed groups.



Crib service in the churchyard, December 2024



Music Sunday, June 2024

Welcome from Our Parishes

St Mary's Church, Hemyock continued

It is our aim to keep our church open, to welcome all who enter for services, to visit, or those who wish to find a quiet place to pray and find solace in the presence of God.

The Friends of St Mary's fund-raise for the fabric and special projects of St Mary's by holding regular events in the church or village. This includes concerts, open gardens, auction of promises, coffee shop, flower and Christmas tree festivals plus many more.

We hold Christmas and Summer Fairs in the church and churchyard which are all supported by the wider community.

Finance

All local and MC commitments are currently met, however, for the last two years only 55% of the requested common fund for Hemyock with Culm Davy has been met. The PCC is working on a plan to increase stewardship and fundraising. Fundraising events, including coffee mornings and the occasional musical concert, are well supported.

Financially we support the following:

Dr Nicci Maxwell, CMS working in South Sudan. Potters Village (Uganda, including supporting a child).

Others: Royal British Legion, Mission to Seafarers, Food Bank, Christian Response to Easter Europe Shoebox Appeal, Farming Community Network. A collection point for clothes for refugees.

There is also the Mary Waldron Education Trust, which is normally chaired by the Rector and provides grants for help with further education for young people in Hemyock and Clayhidon. The trust meets once a month.



2024 Summer Fete at St Mary's church, Hemyock



Baptism at St Mary's, 2025

Welcome from Our Parishes

The Chapel, Culm Davy

Parish Population – included with Hemyock

Village Website – as for Hemyock

Electoral Roll – included with Hemyock

Average Sunday attendance - 11

Short Description

The hamlet of Culm Davy comprises about two dozen homes to the northwest of Hemyock on the slopes of the Blackdown Hills. Always an area where farming has predominated, for many years it boasted a railway halt and siding at Whitehall which was used for the receipt and dispatch of farm goods. Clay for brickmaking was also mined for a while.

The Chapel is seen very much as the focal point of this small community, even by those with no church affiliation, and the care given to the building and its churchyard is evidence of this.



The Chapel

Having a Chapel of Ease enabled inhabitants of the hamlet to avoid the hard and frequently flooded walk of two miles to St Mary`s. The small flint-stone building was extensively reconstructed around 1850 and is surrounded by a charming churchyard whose gravestones record a recurring pattern of local names. Many are from families who are still involved in farming nearby and the present members loyally sustain their links.

Worship and Mission

Services take place every 2 weeks and the usual congregation is around ten. Harvest and Carols can draw more than 60 which is full capacity.

It is the intimacy and simplicity of the Chapel that many find particularly appealing, and most services see people coming from other churches within the Mission Community.

Welcome from Our Parishes

The Chapel, Culm Davy continued

Vision for the Future

Currently we use the Book of Common Prayer and worshippers appreciate the link to the strong traditions of the Church. But the congregation would be happy to develop new ideas with the next incumbent. The building could lend itself to other forms of worship: for example, it was chosen for the first Taizé service in the Mission Community, which was very well received.

Finance

All Common Fund and Mission Community commitments are met



Welcome from Our Parishes

St Andrew's Church, Clayhidon

Parish Population – 508

Village Website - www.clayhidon.org.uk

Electoral Roll – 42

Average Sunday attendance - 15

Short Description

Clayhidon lies to the east of Hemyock along the county and Diocese border. Its farms and dwellings are scattered across the plateau of the Blackdowns or cling to the sides of the valleys of the Bolham River and the Culm. It has no true village centre, the church and public house having but twelve houses in close proximity. Part of the settlement of Smeatharpe, some six miles from the church to the south-east, along narrow winding lanes, lies within the parish. The scattered hamlet of Bolham Water lies three miles south; a group of farms and houses is centred on Garlandhayes in the north-east; while Rosemary Lane, half a mile to the south of the church, has the largest concentration of houses in the parish.



Clayhidon is very much an agricultural community (see the picture on page 2), with many long-established farming folk, but also with commuters who work in Wellington, Taunton, and elsewhere, including professional and business people. There are a number of retired people. All these groups contribute to the social and cultural life of the community.

Parish Activities

Clayhidon has a number of community organisations including the local history group, art club, Clayhidon friends (ladies group). The (independent) parish hall runs a programme of entertainment as well as offering useful space for a variety of events.

Details about parish activities can be found on the village website (see above).

The Church

The first records date from 1274 when Ralph de Hidon was presented to the living; his effigy is in the south aisle. Alterations have been carried out in every century, with major work being done in the C15th by the Dynham family, which included the erection of the tower and south aisle. The tower contains 6 bells which are rung at festivals etc. by the MC ringing team. The church is Grade I listed, and the Church Room is Grade II listed.

Welcome from Our Parishes

St Andrew's Church, Clayhidon continued

Some renovation work is in progress – the biggest recent job has been renewing the roof of the south aisle in 2018 and installing under-pew electric heating in 2024. The Church Room has a new heating system and has just been redecorated. The church is about to be redecorated.

The church room is adjacent to the church and provides space for meetings and social occasions. There is a modern disabled toilet.

The lovely church yard is large and open for burials.

Worship and Mission

There are services at Clayhidon on three Sundays a month. A feature of worship here are the regular “special services” which include the annual Riders’ Service (see picture ->) and Plough Sunday Service, plus the Easter morning “Sunrise” service. Our annual Rogation service exercises our right to use the original path to the church through the adjacent “Half Moon” Inn! We also have joint services with the Rosemary Lane Chapel several times each year, which bonds the two Christian communities.



Horse riders service



Vision for the Future

We try to attract the younger members of the community to our range of special and family services, as well as Christmas and Easter services, and this achieves a measure of success, (<-see picture of children making posies for Mothering Sunday). Post-service hospitality is varied and imaginative to create a social club for the wider community.

We are keen to bring these people into the “mainstream” of church activities. As Clayhidon doesn’t have a traditional village centre the Rector would have to be prepared to call on Clayhidon residents in their own homes and to attend Parish activities in the Parish Hall.

Finance

All common fund and MC commitments are comfortably met. The separate fabric fund is well endowed. Many local and national charities are supported each year.

Welcome from Our Parishes

All Saints Church, Culmstock

Parish Population – 983

Village Website - www.culmstock-pc.org.uk

Electoral Roll – 39

Average Sunday attendance - 13

Short Description

Culmstock is the most westerly part of the MC. The village has an excellent primary school and a pre-school. Successive Heads have maintained a good relationship with All Saints' Church. The village has a shop/café, a garage and a pub with a reputation for good food. There are 35 council houses and a few Housing Trust properties. It has daily bus services to Taunton, Wellington and the coast at Seaton with a weekly service to Tiverton. Junction 27 of the M5 is 10 minutes away and Tiverton Parkway mainline station is similar.



Parish Activities

There are many organisations in the parish including a garden society, cricket club and Brownies.

We hold "Open the Book" monthly at the primary school, and the school comes to the church for their own services at Christmas, Harvest and at Remembrance and Easter. A class from the school come once a month in the summer months, undertaking activities around the churchyard, which have been very well received.

A monthly "Charity Café" coffee morning is attended by many who are not members of the congregation.

The Friends of All Saints' support fundraising activities.

A session of supervised stretching exercises uses the Tower Room.

A gardening group meets every Saturday to care for the churchyard. It has created several raised beds that are tended by children from the school.

We intend to create a garden of remembrance in the NW corner of the churchyard for the internment of Ashes with a Memorial Book to record names and dates to be kept in a glass case in the church.

Welcome from Our Parishes

All Saints Church, Culmstock continued

The excellent acoustics have attracted a local couple who run concerts of early music throughout the year.

The village hall is independent of the church. It is used daily by the school for the mid-day meal, by the Parish Council, Brownies, Yoga, Pilates, the annual flower show, a pantomime and a fancy-dress party. There is a community garden and pavilion/BBQ.

The Church

The church is in the centre of the village. It dates from the 14th century with early 16th C features and was reordered in the 19th C including fine Victorian stained-glass windows. In 1824/25 a clerestory was created that increases the light and provides excellent acoustics that make it a popular venue for musical events.

The Baptistry has been converted to a kitchen with limited facilities. Within the last 20 years we have installed under pew heating in the central Nave and a sound system. We meet the need for WCs until the reordering is complete with a Portaloo in the churchyard.

The long-standing proposal by the Churchwardens, supported by the PCC, to provide WCs and to remove the pews West of the cross passage has been developed into a plan for the complete reordering of the church. We now await our Architect's revised plan in order to apply for Faculty and then to seek funding. Reaction to the plan has been positive both from the Archdeacon and the DAC. As part of the reordering, we will re-plaster and paint the ceiling of the Nave.

There are two unique features:

A Yew Tree grows out of the top of the Tower. It has been there for at least 300 years and is protected from removal.

The Culmstock Cope. A medieval Cope that was hidden by the parishioners from destruction by Protestant extremists in the reign of Edward VI, restored by the Royal College of Needlework and now kept in a glass case.

The churchyard was closed for burials under a Privy Council Order. Its maintenance is the responsibility of Mid Devon District Council, but it is now primarily cared for by the Churchyard Group, a majority of whom do not attend Services.

The tower contains 8 bells which are rung before most mid-morning Sunday Services.



Louvre removal at All Saints church

Welcome from Our Parishes

All Saints Church, Culmstock continued

Worship and Mission

There is a Service every Sunday.

Our Rector is assisted by 4 Licenced lay ministers and a Churchwarden leads BCP Morning Prayer every Tuesday.

Our Services are a mixture of BCP, Common Worship and festival/experimental ones based on CW and intended to attract new worshippers. The festival ones are attended by people who are already regular members of the congregation and have not so far attracted many newcomers. A local choir has for some months been singing Compline on the second Sunday of each month.

Our style of worship is liberal catholic.



*Culmstock Primary school children
learning in the churchyard*

Vision for the Future

Local organisations have been consulted in our plans for reordering and there have been widespread promises to use the enhanced facilities.

Our aim is to get more people to use the building, both as a service to the local community and also in the hope that some may become worshippers.

The school has been particularly supportive of the plan and would make greater use of the church when it has improved facilities.

Finance

We pay our full share of the Common Fund and our running costs. We maintain the fabric in accordance with our Quinquennial Inspection report.

All Saints church are fortunate to have various fringe members of the church who provide useful assistance and resources, and are involved in things such as maintenance of the churchyard.

Further Information Sources

Our own MC website is found at www.culmkirks.co.uk

Individual parish Information can also be viewed on the “A Church Near You” website
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Other useful websites are:

<http://exeter.anglican.org/vacancies/>

(which contains useful video introductions to the diocese)

