



PARISH PROFILE

An exciting opportunity for a 0.5 Part Time Rector, in the rural parish churches of Dolton, Dowland, Iddesleigh & Monkokehampton, Devon

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1. ARCHDEACON FOREWORD – VERENA BREED

The Venerable Verena Breed, Archdeacon of Barnstaple

Thank you for your interest in this part-time post. It presents a wonderful opportunity to lead a rural benefice into the next stage of its journey. The parishes of Dolton, Dowland, Iddesleigh and Monkeokehampton are a distinct group with a strong identity and a real desire to grow younger, be more diverse, and reach out to the wider community.

Across the benefice there are already great examples of outreach to children, youth and families, with some congregations already being truly “all age”. It is a firm foundation on which the parishes, with your help, will seek to build. The new Rector will not only have the support of experienced Churchwardens and committed lay leaders, but also of the wider deanery.



We are seeking a priest with a heart for pastoral care, teaching, preaching and a desire to further mission and ministry. You will be working with a group of parishes looking to strengthen the ways in which they already work together as a benefice, and that want to grow in faith and discipleship.

We would hope that the right candidate will bring new energy and fresh ideas to this role of Rector. While we would welcome someone with experience, candidates for whom this will be a first incumbency are also encouraged to apply. This is a 0.5 post, which in the Diocese of Exeter is three days a week plus Sundays, so it will afford you some flexibility in terms of how you want to work. You will be invited to make your home in the Dolton Rectory, and you will receive 0.5 of the stipend as approved by the Diocesan Synod for a stipendiary priest of incumbent status.

The successful candidate will get to know those who live and work in these rural parishes and support them as they seek to find new and exciting ways of making a difference across this benefice, encouraging new disciples and enabling them to grow in their discipleship; they would be someone who is open to exploring the possibilities of rural ministry, and prepared to work collaboratively and ecumenically.

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. These parishes of Dolton, Dowland, Iddesleigh and Monkeokehampton are all in the Torrington Deanery where the Rev'd Tracey Doyle is Rural Dean. In turn this Deanery is part of the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple, under the care of the Bishop of Crediton.

Our Diocesan Vision

We seek to be people who together are:

Growing in Prayer

Prayer is conversation with God and is part of a healthy Christian life. Prayer is a life-giving activity that opens up deep places within us to God's transforming grace. It is essential if we are to become the people and the Church God calls us to be.

Making new disciples

As the Christian story is less and less known, we must find new ways of telling the story, of explaining the faith and giving a reason for the hope that is in us. With Jesus Christ as our companion and guide, we can travel through life differently.

Serving the people of Devon with joy

As followers of Jesus Christ, we want to make a difference in the world and make God's love and justice known. In our church life, we seek to be local, participatory, and outward-looking.

Further information regarding our Diocesan Vision can be found in our Next Steps document at www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy

Living in Mission Communities

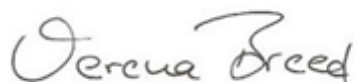
Our strategy centres on Mission Communities - parishes working together to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively in Devon. The phrase Mission Communities sums up what we need to be as a Church in the 21st century: **mission-orientated, community-focused, and locally-rooted.**

Mission Communities help us to work together and support one another better. They enable us to be more flexible in our mission and more responsive to the different contexts and cultures of Devon.

A Mission Community aims to express the fullness of the life of the Church **locally**. This will include:

- regular prayer and worship
- pastoral care
- evangelism and mission, often in collaboration with ecumenical partners
- opportunities for learning, teaching, nurture and growth for disciples of all ages
- youth and children's work and worship
- equipping members for ministry in the community and the local Church
- connecting with the local community, especially in service to the poor
- good administration and stewardship of time, resources and buildings

If our Mission Communities are to flourish, they need to be more than just a structure. They need to live and embody the life of Jesus Christ and to share that life with others. Jesus came so that we can have life in all its fullness. That is our vision and our hope for the Church in Devon. You are warmly invited to contact me directly if you would like a confidential conversation about the post, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Diocese.



2. ROLE DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

ROLE DESCRIPTION

We are a Benefice of four rural village churches which are unique, but we have a shared passion for our community and supporting those around us. The involvement and spiritual welfare of the very youngest and eldest members of our parishes is of great importance to us, and we look forward to welcoming a **new 0.5 Rector** who will build strong relationships within our community, growing the churches for all ages. Our Benefice sees the following as key priorities for the role:

*“A desire for **being visible and active in the wider community**, becoming involved and showing willingness to join and lead us as we grow spiritually, building on our strong foundations of success, particularly with young families and children across the Benefice.”*

*“Showing great empathy and willingness to visit those in need, offering **pastoral visiting and care** across the Benefice.”*

*“A confident leader who has **strong preaching and teaching skills**, making worship engaging for all, including those within our Primary School.”*

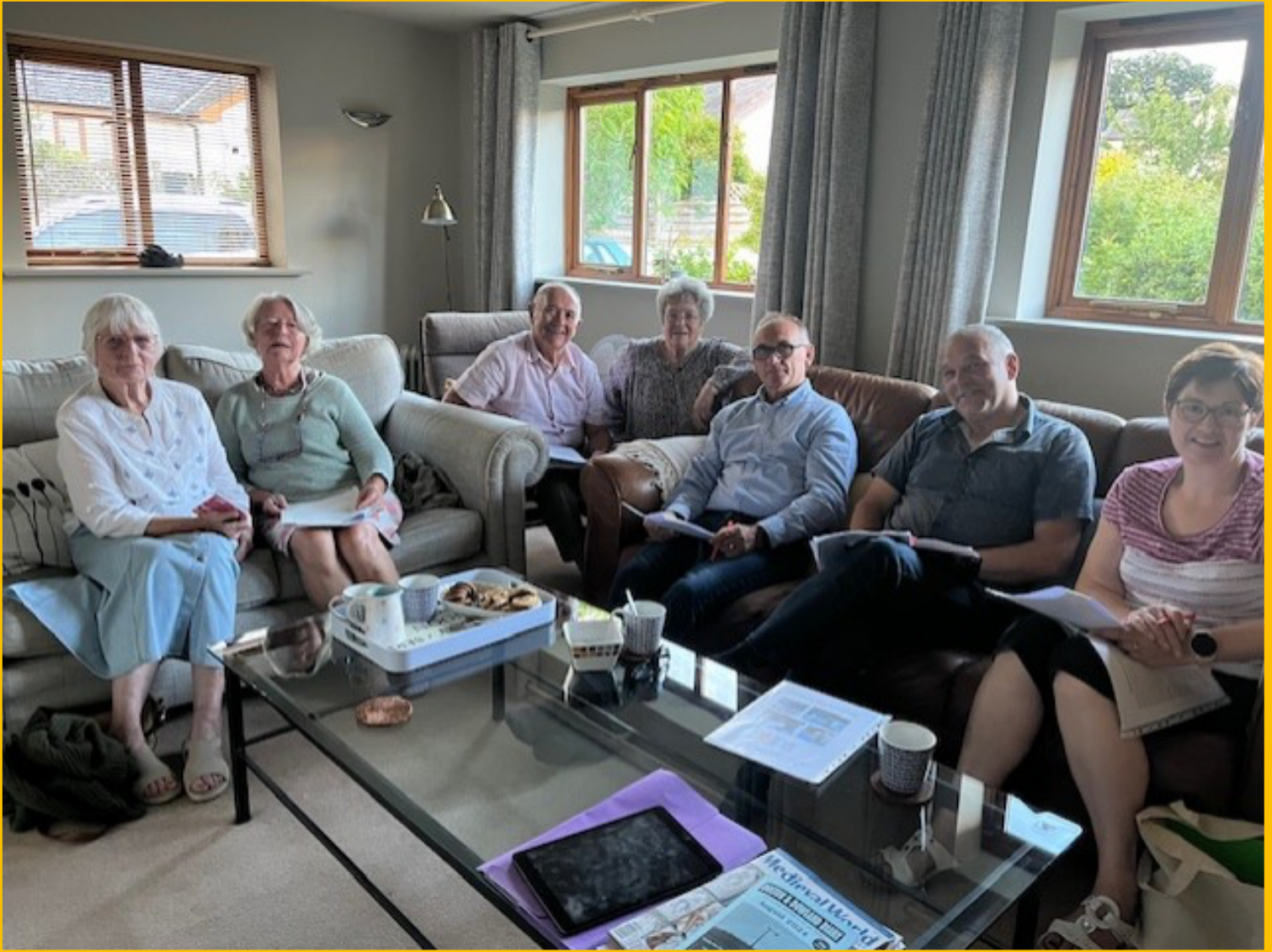
PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are a Benefice tucked in a beautiful area of rural Devon, and we would like a Rector who would immerse themselves into country life, come rain or shine! We welcome applicants for this 0.5 term post, who are experienced or equally those who are looking for their first position and are excited by being the beating heart of a spiritual, rural community. We would like someone who:

- ◆ is prayerful and inspires others on their spiritual journeys, being committed to supporting those of all ages to grow in faith and love.
- ◆ is passionate about bringing younger children and families into the churches, helping to grow opportunities for our expanding population.
- ◆ is dedicated to support our Benefice pastorally, having capacity, willingness and a compassionate ear, visiting those at times of need.
- ◆ has a good sense of humour and inter-personal skills, being enthusiastic and supporting collaboration across the Benefice and wider faith communities
- ◆ is able to drive/travel between the churches through narrow Devonshire lanes!

3. WHO WE ARE

The Team – Churchwardens from the Benefice



4. OUR JOURNEY SO FAR...



<https://www.savetheparish.com/a-parish-success-story/>

In early 2024 with the help of Save The Parish, Dowland PCC, on behalf of the Benefice, wrote to the Bishop objecting to Diocese plans to reorganise the Benefice into a group of eight churches under a single priest. The observations and concerns put forward by the Benefice were given full consideration and we were successful in gaining the support of Archdeacon Verena and Bishop Jackie to remain as a Benefice of four with our own dedicated priest.

As one PCC member stated, **“The thought that we may lose our own dedicated priest means that our new one will be treasured all the more!”**

“
The task of maintaining the individuality of our small parish church was daunting in a time when churches are amalgamating and closing countrywide, but to us our medieval church isn't just a building, it's
”
the focal point of the village for generations past and present.

5. THE PARISHES WE SERVE

St James - Iddesleigh



St Peters - Dowland



All Saints - Monkehampton



St Edmunds - Dolton



Dolton has a VA church primary school. The village is served by a well-stocked village store and post office, a traditional butcher and two public houses (both serving good food). There is also a garage/filling station and agricultural and animal feed merchants at Dolton Beacon, a mile out of the village. The nearest health centre and veterinary practise can be found in the nearby towns of Great Torrington, Chulmleigh or Winkleigh.



For larger shopping trips, Dolton is close to Great Torrington (7 miles) that has a small Lidl plus a variety of independent shops. Both Barnstaple and Bideford (each 15 miles from Dolton) or Exeter (27 miles to the south) are larger shopping areas with more traditional department stores and independent shops. Plus, of course, **Exeter Cathedral** (left).

Dolton is situated close to the **Tarka Trail** which is a popular 180-mile walking and cycling trail crossing North Devon and Exmoor and features **the longest, traffic-free cycle route in the UK**.





Dowland is a very rural parish of 2.7 square miles in an unspoilt area of mid-Devon. Views are grand in all directions but especially of Dartmoor to the south with the gentle contours of Cosden and many of the Tors. The parish lies some nine miles south and east of Great Torrington and about five miles to the north of Hatherleigh. It is sometimes difficult to realise that the fields with hedge surrounds, which delight the eye, are man-made stretching back centuries. Dowland is 1.3 miles distance to Dolton and 1.4 miles distance to Iddesleigh. Monkokehampton is 5 miles away. Dowland is surrounded by farms some of which have been farmed by the same family for generations.

Iddesleigh is conveniently situated between Dowland and Monkokehampton, the church sits high above the road which passes through the village. The reward for climbing the steep path is the view from the south door, which is surely one of the best in the country! Just around the corner is the well-known 'Duke of York' public house, set amongst an array of ancient cottages with Farms for City Children being only 1.3 miles away.

Monkokehampton is situated 8 miles away from Okehampton where you can access Dartmoor National Park and the highest point on the moor Higher Willhays is only 13 miles away. The coast is not far away with Bude and Widemouth in North Cornwall and Westward Ho! in North Devon for beaches and coastal walking. Our neighbouring village of Exbourne has a Church of England Primary School but most Primary school children are bussed to Hatherleigh Community Primary and secondary scholars to Okehampton Community College. The town of Hatherleigh 3 miles away, has bowling, cricket and football clubs and a convenience store and a local market with various stalls on Tuesday mornings.

Widemouth Bay



RHS Rosemoor



Halsdon Nature Reserve, Dolton



6. DOLTON - THE RECTORY

The Rectory is a 1960s built, 4 bedroomed house about 200 metres from the church, situated on a quiet lane amidst lush countryside and we would expect that the successful applicant use the Rectory as their place of residence, allowing them to become known and be part of our village life.



Village life, in general, is busy and neighbours are extremely supportive of each other. We have a very popular village hall, which is used regularly and frequently for weekly coffee mornings, dancing classes, yoga, Arts and Craft group and Chair Aerobics, plus many regular monthly groups, such as Ladies Phoenix Circle, Parish Council meetings and bingo evenings. Also, within the village there are three Book Clubs, a Village Golf Society, the Annual Horticultural Show and Sunday morning Walking Football, amongst other groups. We have regular village 'Big Breakfasts' which are popular with the residents and are arranged by the Village Hall Committee.

6. DOLTON – ST. EDMUNDS

Our Grade II* Listed parish church, dedicated to St Edmund, has been the centre of Dolton village life for 750 years and currently serves our village population of 683¹ residents. The church is kept open on a daily basis for visitors and our Visitors Book is interesting to read to learn of the many places from where people have travelled.



The churchyard is maintained by our sexton and a small, but dedicated, group of people from the village who meet monthly (weather permitting) to tidy, weed, prune and sweep the pathways around the church.



Our PCC meeting in January 2020, in the parking area of the Rectory, to observe the covid social distancing rules.

¹ 2021 national census

We are ably served by our PCC of 7 members, plus currently one vacancy, and our Treasurer keeps us on the 'straight and narrow'. We are also pleased to advise that we are able to pay our Parish Share, in full, each year. We are currently in the process of applying for a faculty for extensive alterations to our church as we plan to improve the vestry, update the heating system and create a larger meeting space at the back of the nave. We have a certain amount of funds that have been donated by benefactors over recent years, but we must now go forward to consider fundraising to allow these plans to proceed.

There is a team of bell ringers who regularly ring for Sunday services and at weddings. The team also ring at other nearby churches, when requested.



We are part of a Benefice of four churches – each different, but we work together as one and this has been achieved by the hard work of all four churches, especially in recent years. As the largest of the four, since covid lockdown ended then followed by the departure of our previous priest-in-charge last September, our PCC has reintroduced a weekly Sunday Morning Service, currently lead by a visiting priest one Sunday a month² for Communion and the remaining services being led by members of our congregation, with others Reading and leading in our Intercessions. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month we meet as a benefice in one of our churches, on a rotational basis.

We are looking to expand our range of services in the future.

²Please see testimonials from ordained priests that we have been able to invite to lead our Communion services and have become new friends to our churches.

Currently we also hold a service on alternate Wednesday mornings, using more informal forms of worship (including those from the Iona and Taize communities) also a contemplative service – Breathing Space. There is no regular Sunday evening worship, but occasional healing services and an annual All Souls’ service are held, which have proved popular. We also have the traditional 2-minute silence by the village war memorial, before proceeding to church for a full Remembrance Sunday service, which is popular with our villagers.

Two separate House Meetings for bible study, prayer and fellowship are held on a weekly basis – in alternating homes – and are well attended. There is also a recently formed Open Prayer group, held fortnightly in the church on Mondays, early evening.

Unfortunately, our congregation numbers have not returned to pre-covid size and we are therefore looking for an energetic and enthusiastic priest-in-charge for our benefice, to take us forward.



St Edmunds has a small Singing Group as part of our congregation, who occasionally sing before the start of our service, or lead the congregation during the service on Sunday mornings.

We have a good working relationship with the Voluntary Aided village primary school, who hold weekly services in our church and currently about 30 children (aged 4 – 11) attend the school. The school has a ‘Good’ for both Ofsted and SIANS (The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) Inspections and we would hope a new priest-in-charge would be able to integrate into the school life and be able to encourage young people and families into our church.

We also work in conjunction with our village Baptist chapel and one of our organists regularly plays for their services, whilst another member does, on occasions, lead a service for them.



Details of all village events are published in our locally produced village magazine 'The Dolton and Dowland Diary' which is distributed to all households in the parish, free of charge.

More details of village life can be accessed on the village Facebook page: 'Dolton Dowland & surrounding areas' and our benefice website is www.doltonparishchurch.org

Our regular village fundraising events have – and do – include the Spring and Christmas Fayres held in the village hall, to which a large number of people from the village are involved. We also have the Annual Horticultural Show which encourages villagers to submit entries for various categories including flower arranging, displays of specimen flowers and vegetables, sewing and crafts, cake-baking (including a section for men!) photography and a section for children – which includes making an animal using vegetables and / or fruit.

Other recent fundraising events have included a presentation, in church one Saturday evening, of a Christian adaptation of 'Over The rainbow', written and directed by one of our congregation.

Our annual Harvest lunches are also held in the village hall and are well attended by villagers who do not necessarily attend church on a regular basis but are happy to support St Edmunds. We have recently held two parish lunches – one in the local pub and a second in the home of a couple from our congregation. Both lunches were well attended and enjoyed by members of our congregation, these gave us a chance to socialise beyond the after-service coffee time, and generally chat and share interests.

As a church, we also organise and regularly collect donations from the village residents and our own congregation for our local Food Bank.



“

At the present time, there are no children or young families regularly attending St Edmunds, and this is regarded as being a key objective for our new Priest. We are looking for an energetic and enthusiastic new incumbent who is willing to integrate into our village life and school, to be able to provide a variety of services in church and to take the church out into the wider community. He / she should also show a willingness to communicate and utilise the work already done to unite our benefice of Dolton, Dowland, Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton.

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7. DOWLAND – ST. PETERS

Our parish is ancient indeed, with a written record dating back to Saxon times. Long before that our forebears lived here, farmed the land and doubtless enjoyed hunting and fishing, endured hardships in bitter winters and delighted in the spring and the countryside.

St Peter's Church has been a focal point for the community for at least a millennium, and the site on which it sits has probably been hallowed for a thousand years before that. It has been lovingly cared for over the centuries. One cannot but marvel at how much money has been raised, and how many have given time and labour to ensure that it continues as a house of communal worship maintained in good repair, and with its beautiful aura of peace and sanctity intact.

St Peter's Church

The Church of St Peter in Dowland was founded in 1132, although it is thought a simple wooden structure may well have occupied the site before this. Entering through the South door, the fabric of the nave is judged to be Norman, the tower to your left was added in the 15th century, and the North aisle in front of you added in the 16th century. Indeed, the majority of the Church as we see it today dates back to, and has remained unchanged since, these times. There were 3 bells here in 1553, but the present ring of 5 are dated 1826 and the frame in which they swing was installed in 1886, they were then rehung again after restoration work in 1997.





The Church has some very interesting and unusual features, especially its oak 3 bay arcade of which only one other exists in Devon and its 16th century carved bench ends depicting a number of motifs including the crossed keys of St Peter, the severed ear of Malchus, and the Stafford family crest. The pew nearest the pulpit dates to 1546 and shows the Coats of arms of Robert Stafford and Elizabeth Menwenick, who were married in 1520.

With Dowland being set between the battle sites of Torrington and Hatherleigh Moor in early 1646, passing soldiers may well have used the Church as a defensive or mustering point, a common practise during the Civil War, the towers providing excellent lookout posts. It is generally accepted that the mounds in the west of St Peter's Church yard is a burial site for soldiers from these battles.

Church & Community

St Peter's Electoral Role is 10 from a growing population of 108. We consistently have a congregation of 15 to 20 people. The PCC are really strong and well-balanced and see it as their "Mission" **to encourage children and young people to participate in the Church**. To this end we have set up a children's group namely 'PETER'S PATCH', this provides free fun activities for young children in the school holidays. This church is regularly full of 0-8 years old children, all enjoying cooking, crafting, growing vegetables and learning about the natural world and the environment. We also support parents by offering a space to meet and share conversations which is important in this rural community.



This 12th century church retains its medieval Christian heritage and combines the support of young people to be a truly uplifting place for all ages. The teenagers of the parish participate regularly in the life of St Peter's. They willingly help run the cafe at events. The carol service is completely unique as all the lessons are read by the under 18's including solo performers. They are learning to ring the bells and take part in our Remembrance Day service. We are very proud that children of all ages mix regularly with the older generation, and this is beneficial to all.

'Peter's Patch' Children's Group

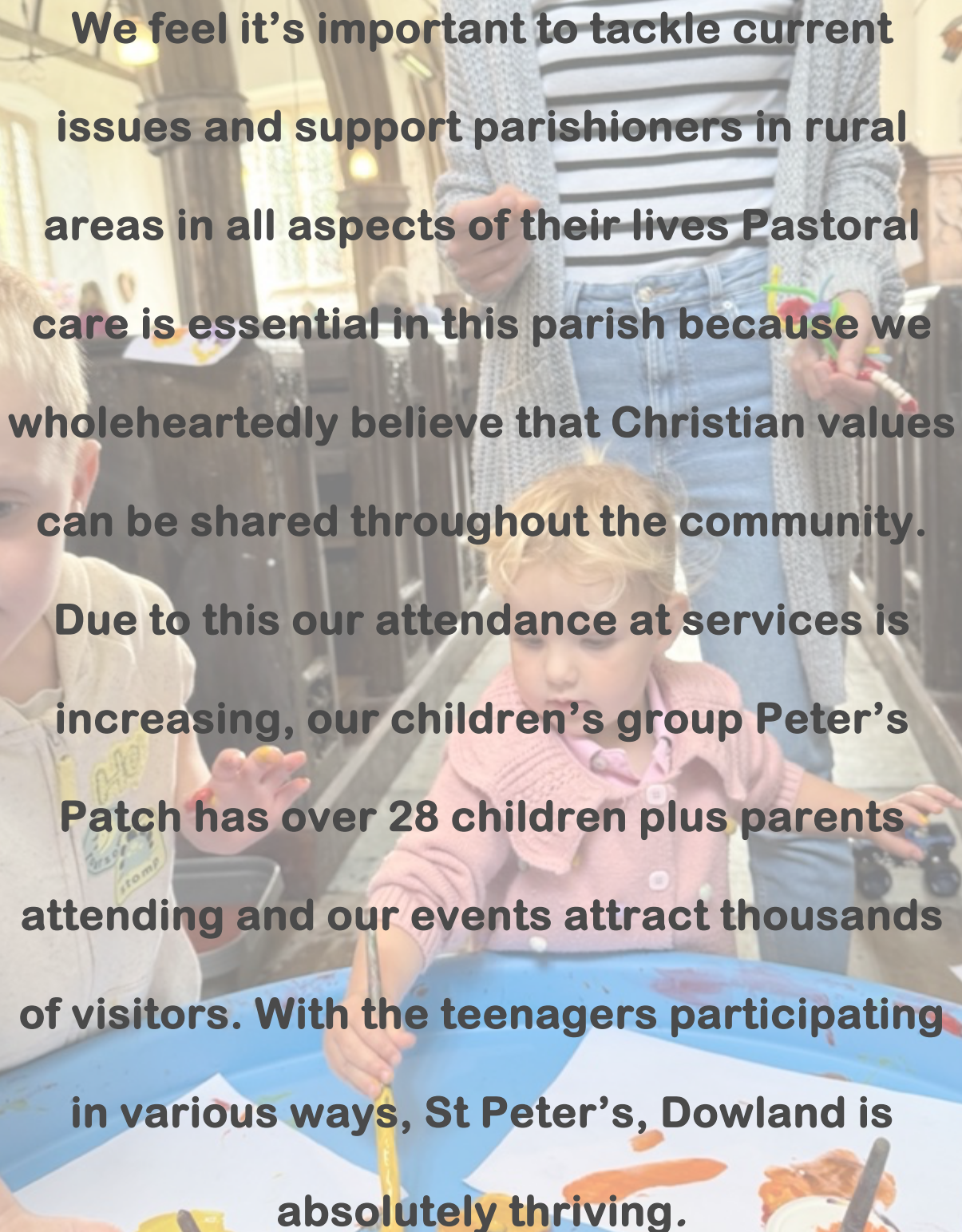


“ Peter's Patch is a truly wonderful and special group which we are very lucky to have. It is entirely free and it really does not matter at all if you don't know anybody also attending, as I can assure you, you'll be made to feel very welcome. There are always lovely craft areas with little bits and pieces your little ones will be proud to take home (& you'll be delighted to keep!) and a hot cuppa and biscuit available for the grown-ups too! ”



Review from one of our parents who regularly attends



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a striped turtleneck and a grey cardigan, stands behind a table, smiling. Two young children, a boy on the left and a girl in the center, are sitting at the table painting. The table is covered with a blue cloth and has several paint containers and brushes. The background shows the interior of a church with arched windows and decorative elements.

We feel it's important to tackle current issues and support parishioners in rural areas in all aspects of their lives Pastoral care is essential in this parish because we wholeheartedly believe that Christian values can be shared throughout the community. Due to this our attendance at services is increasing, our children's group Peter's Patch has over 28 children plus parents attending and our events attract thousands of visitors. With the teenagers participating in various ways, St Peter's, Dowland is absolutely thriving.



In 2022 we built a war memorial dedicated to 3 young men who did not return home from World War 1. A cascade of thousands of poppies flowed down the church tower and created local and national media attention, with BBC news visiting and the imperial war museum formally recording our memorial.



DOWLAND POPPY TRIBUTE REMEMBERS THREE LOST SOLDIERS

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-63419483>

Posted: 8th November 2022 (Excerpt from Exeter Diocese Website.)

A beautiful memorial has been created to remember three young soldiers from Dowland, near Winkleigh, who were killed during World War 1. The memorial was made to honour William Piper, 29, his brother Arthur, 21, and George Westcott, 21. It was discovered that four Piper brothers went to war. The third brother, Harry, passed away at the end of the war from influenza, so the family lost three sons. Whilst none of the Piper family remain in the village, George Westcott's relatives are still farming in the parish. Following the discovery that there was no war memorial for these three young men, a group from Dowland decided to create a tribute for them. As the soldiers were all farmers who were born in the parish, they wanted to create something which had a 'rural feel' which was meaningful and personal.



A metal bench was created as part of the War Memorial in Dowland to honour three soldiers. They created a metal memorial bench,

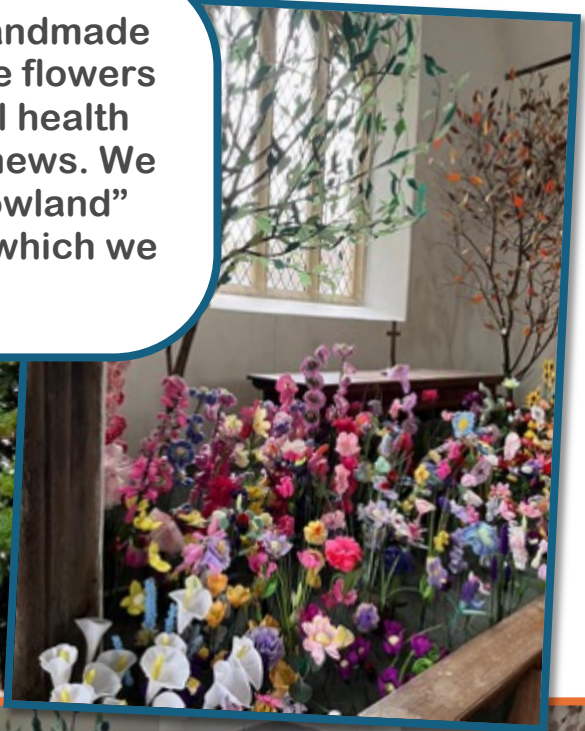


which is situated in the churchyard and decorated with scattered poppies in the grass. Alongside this, they created a beautiful display of 5000 poppies cascading down the church tower. Inside the church there is a display telling the life stories of the three young men, with 3000 individually handmade red flowers encircling the soldiers. Susie Dunn, who helped organise the project, said, "This project actually achieved more than all of this in that it united a whole

community in our determination to permanently remember three young men who had their future stolen in order to protect the values and beliefs of our country over a hundred years ago. "The Imperial War Museum has formally registered our Memorial Seat as an official War Memorial saying that it is one of the 'most beautiful' they have seen and the story of each of our soldiers is now recorded forever."

"The aim was to provide the village with its own focal point where people can pay their respects but ultimately bring the names of our young men back to Dowland for future generations to remember. Arthur Piper, William Piper and George Westcott fought for a world that they would never know."

In July 2024 the community created a handmade meadow. Constructed of 7000 handmade flowers to raise awareness of children's mental health issues. This again featured on the local news. We have been invited to repeat the "Meadowland" display at the 2025 Devon County Show which we consider a great honour.





TRACE PIPER
1857 - 1942.
GOD BLESS YOU.

8. IDDESLEIGH – ST. JAMES

Iddesleigh is a small, very friendly rural parish with a population of around 200. A community deep in the heart of Devon that works in harmony with the landscape to sustain agriculture, tourism, cultural heritage and education for future generations, with an affectionate reverence for time-honoured custom. A place with a great community spirit, in which St James plays a large part.



With magnificent views south over Dartmoor the Church building dates back to 15th Century and is Grade 1 listed. There is much of architectural and historical interest to share with visitors including beautiful roof bosses, one carved with the 'three hares' emblem, many memorial plaques and an effigy of a crusader (probably a member of the Sully family). Its history as a Magna Carta church was brought to life with historic enactment and activities for children in the parish. The Church is open daily welcoming all and offering a space for prayer and reflection.

Sunday morning church attendance is on average twenty adults and a growing number of children and grandchildren. Currently one service of Holy Communion is held, while previously three services took place each month, of which at least one was Holy Communion. Members of the congregation are active in worship, doing bible readings and preparing intercessions as required, with some lay led services of Morning or Evening Prayer in the past. We use both the Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship, singing hymns from Mission Praise. In past years an occasional but enthusiastic choir was led by a regular organist but more recently we rely on one shared organist. During Covid a Benefice wide Skype group was started to pray and worship together and this increased bonds of friendship within the benefice. In this time of interregnum, we have been happy to welcome members of our neighbouring church communities to monthly benefice services. We also welcome members from the Methodist Church in our Parish, who form part of our mission community and with whom we have an excellent relationship, attending their annual Covenant Service, amongst others, as they celebrate certain services with us. Services are an important time of coming together and fellowship across our communities and we often serve refreshments and cake in church afterwards. A keen team of bell ringers ring before certain services and hold a Ringers' festival in September.





Throughout the year special services are very well attended and can see numbers swell to around 100: Mothering Sunday, Easter, the Patronal Festival, Harvest Festival and of course the Carol Service and Christmas Day Service. The Village Hall, formerly the school, is opposite the Church and offers good catering facilities to host a sit down feast for Harvest Supper, Church Teas, a Christmas Fair or indeed a Wedding Breakfast.

The Candlelit service of Nine Lessons and Carols sees the Church well decorated by villagers who do arrangements for church festivals during the year, children of the parish are involved in readings, singing and as candle bearers and mince pies are made to be eaten with clotted cream after the service marking the start of Christmas festivities in the Village. Family involvement is encouraged as much as possible with a commitment to safeguarding behaviour. Posies are made for Mothering Sunday, a Christingle service, A donkey in attendance at the Palm Sunday procession and over the years Messy Church activities set up together with the Methodists have been great fun for all involved. Community events often involve a generous church tea prepared by volunteers and perhaps a trip up the tower to see the spectacular views or a get together on the village green to sing songs of praise.

Finances are sound and some fundraising events aim to raise funds for the maintenance and improvement of the Church as a living building. The most recent enjoyable and profitable event St James hosted was All Around the Year, a sell-out concert of music and poetry given by the newly formed Iddesleigh Quartet and Claire and Michael Morpurgo and Carol Hughes. Charity fund raising at church services collects for various causes locally such as North Devon Hospice or Save the Children. Occasional attendees to the services continue to support the church in different ways and parishioners help with upkeep as age and ability allow.



The Village has an active Women's Group and a Friendly Society – one of only two remaining in Devon – which celebrates Club Day on the May Day holiday with a parade, church service and a lunch provided by the excellent Duke of York Inn. The day culminates in sports for all and a village tea. Many visitors are drawn to Iddesleigh by the fact

that the famous 'War Horse' story written by Michael Morpurgo was set in the parish or to walk their dog along the Tarka trail and past the Church where Parson Jack Russell served as curate. The Charity 'Farms for City Children' is also based in the parish and a visit to the Church is often part of a school trip to explore the village and the village hall with its War Horse painting and where there is a permanent exhibition of the work of local photographer, James Ravillious who captured the chain of rural life that goes back into unrecorded history.

We have lived in Iddesleigh for nigh on 50 years. Church, pub, 80 souls in the village. Village Hall, Village Green, far from anywhere, yet the centre of our world. Known all around as the friendly village, it is a community that has always looked after each other. The church and chapel are the beating hearts of the community, have been for centuries. Do come and see us. You'll be assured of a warm welcome.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature of Michael Morpurgo in black ink on a light-colored background.

Michael Morpurgo



“ *Iddesleigh is deep down Devon lanes but its welcome and outreach is great, it can reasonably claim to be an example of an active and caring rural parish. As our new vicar we seek a gentle soul with grace, empathy and a sunny disposition who is open to different styles of worship, active in caring for our church family and making links within the community.*

”

9. MONKOKEHAMPTON – ALL SAINTS



Monkokehampton lies in a very rural area of mid Devon between Okehampton, Hatherleigh and Winkleigh. This small community consists of a group of old cottages in the centre with some newer bungalows on the periphery with an adult population of approximately 150. The

surrounding land, some of which has been farmed by the same family for generations, still continues to be productive and farmed in similar ways. We are the smallest parish in our benefice with the church and hall events at the heart of it.

There are 11 members on the Church Electoral Roll. We hold services on a monthly basis on the third Sunday of the month which can take the form of Holy Communion, All Age service or Morning Prayer. We have a regular attendance for services averaging 18 adults plus family youths under 25 joining for friendly, welcoming and relaxed fellowship. We know our congregation well and would notice if someone was absent and take action in a caring pastoral way to find out if all is well. We work closely with Iddesleigh Methodist Chapel who don't hold a service on 3rd Sunday and attend our church, 2 members join us to provide music with guitar and recorder to help lead our hymns. One of our PCC members helps occasionally play the organ for some of our services. We all enjoy singing and invite parishioners to choose their favourite hymns for a Songs of Praise evening.

“As members of Iddesleigh Methodist church we have been joining All Saints for their 3rd Sunday services and play for the hymns which we enjoy doing and we appreciate the welcoming, warmth and fellowship”



Some of our teenagers attend a Youth Café in Hatherleigh provided by SWYM (South West Youth Ministry) and attend Stowford Camp a youth ministry weekend for fellowship and ecumenical fun. Our Christmas carol service last year was well supported with 70 attending, we asked members of our village community to read some of the lessons and join us for our traditional service and fellowship. Harvest Festival is always well supported averaging 48 attendance and providing lunch afterwards in the Old Schoolroom to boost our church funds. The village held a community service in church to celebrate the late Queens Jubilee followed by a bring and share lunch and social which was well attended with 49 attending church.





The following year we celebrated King Charles Coronation in a similar way with 40 attending.



To raise funds, we hold an annual Cream Tea Afternoon and trialled a Big Breakfast Morning, and a joint Coffee morning with the Old Schoolroom Committee, these events are well supported by the village residents and

Our church is used by the community for marriages, baptisms and funerals with everyone welcomed. Monkeokehampton implies possession by a monastery, but the parish was in lay hands at the time of the Domesday Book and the patronage has never been connected with a monastery. The abbey of Tavistock held land on the manor from early times. The first rector to be recorded was Roberto in 1265.

The parish church, dedicated to All Saints, is Victorian being rebuilt in 1855 following a disastrous fire. The tower survived and is from the 14th Century being embattled, perpendicular of three stages with crocheted pinnacles, three of which have been replaced quite recently when much work was carried out to the stonework of the tower. The tower contains 4 bells, three of which are medieval, they are chimed only for services. The church consists of a single aisle, chancel and nave. It is quite small seating just under 100. The colourful east window was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition prior to its installation. In 2020 whilst the church was closed during Covid Stuart Bird and William studied our church windows and photographed them, then researched their history and who produced them.



There is a small electric organ and heating is supplied by electric under pew oil filled radiators. The churchyard, still used for burials is well maintained, we're currently trialling leaving sections for the wildlife and to reduce upkeep costs. There is a public footpath running through it. In 2020 we completed the major restoration to the listed Lych gate which is a statement structure at the entrance to the churchyard, it was blessed at our Harvest service by our previous incumbent.



The Old Schoolroom next to the church has been refurbished in the last 14 years and is our community centre for various events. There is a Ladies Group who meet monthly replacing the W.I and four yoga sessions a week in the hall. The community supports village events like coffee mornings, family bingo's, cream teas and fun days whether they are hosted by the church or hall committee, they are the central social hub for our village.

It is felt a candidate with knowledge of rural life and the countryside, who is interested in all ages and would be prepared to do some pastoral visiting and be seen in the parish, would be suitable.

10. TESTIMONIALS

For almost a year now and at the request of the churchwardens I have regularly celebrated the Eucharist and preached on Sundays in the four churches. On every occasion I have felt welcomed and appreciated. These people are in good heart and are blessed with confident and sensible lay leadership (churchwardens and others).

Over the months I have formed an impression of the priestly ministry that the congregations want for themselves and for the villages. I would describe that ministry under two headings.

First, Services. Services have been described as the 'shop windows' of the Church whereby local people are attracted to faith. Some of the congregation members are content with 'a nice service', well prepared and led. Others look in addition for spiritual depth and challenge in the worship.

The other priority for these people is pastoral care of the congregation and the wider community. Visiting homes and the places of work is crucial to getting to know people and being known. Without it the worship in church risks becoming stunted and self-seeking.

Clearly a priest on 0.5 will need to be as well organised as they are motivated since both these priorities for mission will need to be shared with lay people. The priest should be experienced in being alongside a wide range of people, intuitive to their needs and willing to learn.

The villages are blessed with natural platforms for developing ministry e.g. the Church of England school, the pubs, village organisations and more. If the new priest quickly delights in these opportunities then the outlook is good. This is a job that should be enjoyable and rewarding for the right person.

I wish everyone well as the discernment process moves forward.

The Very Reverend Graham Smith

(former Dean of Norwich and now living in retirement)



I am a retired vicar (from two Rural Teams of Parishes) having spent 29 years of my ministry in North Devon. Retirement, for 13 years now, has given me the joy of helping in 5 different 'inter-regnums'- two of which have been in this delightful benefice. The first was before the recently retired Incumbent, Reverend Susan Oldham, began and the second after she left.

What a diverse small group of four parishes but how good to see how lovingly and well they have been working together during these two vacancies. They each have their special character and characters from the larger village of Dolton to the 3 smaller villages of Dowland, Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton.

Previous full-time vicars have, of course, much to be thanked for in how they have worked with their congregations to become so and the lovely rural 'volks' have responded by working so welcomingly and worshipfully to make both their Sunday worship and their community involvement a real Christ-like hub within their own villages and the benefice.

I am praying for them as they seek a new part-time incumbent for the Benefice and would be so happy to talk with any potential candidates for the post.



John Carvosso

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11. Appendices

A. Benefice Fact Sheet

	Dolton	Dowland	Iddesleigh	Monkokehampton
Parish Figures*:				
A. Number of churches in parish	1	1	1	1
B. Population of parish	683	258	290 approx	121
C. Current electoral roll	30	8	19	11
D. Current number of participants	25	10	12	8
E. Usual Sunday attendance over 16	7-20	17	20-22	20
F. Usual Sunday attendance under 16	0	0	1	1
Special services in the last year:				
A. Number of baptisms	0	1	0	0
B. Number of confirmation candidates	0	0	0	0
C. Number of weddings	2	0	0	0
D. Number of funerals in church	2	0	2	1
E. Number of funerals in crematoria	1	0	0	0
Parish Institutions:				
A. Names of schools in the parish.	Dolton Church of England Primary School	0	0	0
B. Number of residential/nursing homes	0	0	0	0
C. Names of hospitals in the parish	0	0	0	0
D. Other key institutions	0	0	Farms for City Children	0
Parish Finance:				
A. How much Common Fund is requested from the parish for the current year?	£16,516	£2,856	£4,755	£1,516
B. Is the parish up to date with CF payments in the current year?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, started to pay full in July 24 onwards
C. What percentage of the CF request was paid last year?	100%	75%	80%	10%
D. If there is a capital project in hand, what is the projected cost?	Cost awaiting quotes **	No	No	No

* Attendance of services is higher than the participant numbers because members from different congregations travel to support services in neighbouring churches.

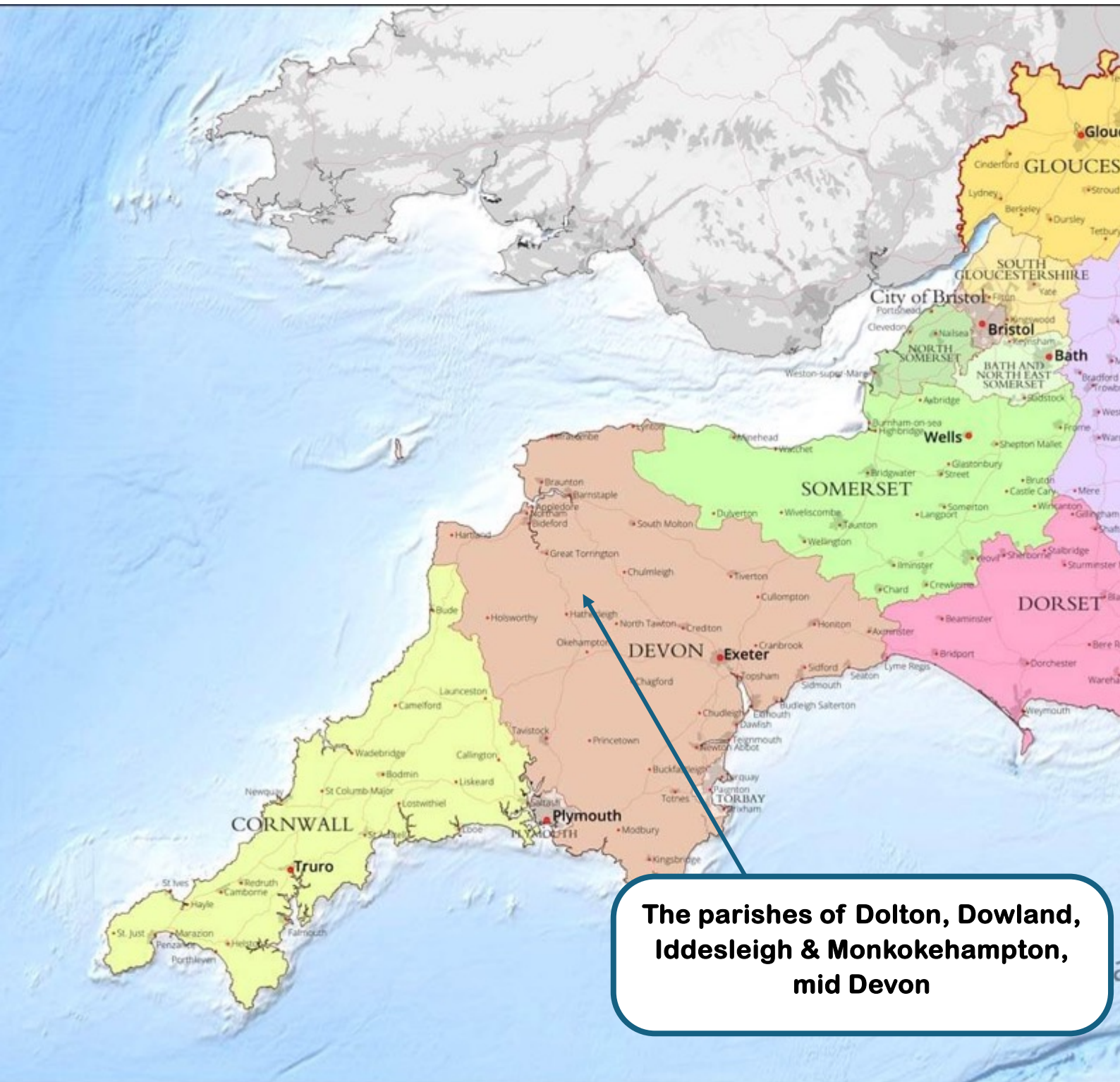
** Capital Project in Dolton – Cost awaiting quotes. To clear excess furniture from rear of church and to provide a useable lockable vestry with relative heating, lighting etc. This will provide a useable and flexible area for wider use. Proceeding to the quote stage. The project has been approved by DAC in its initial presentation.

B. Schedule of Services

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday	5 th Sunday
Dolton – St. Edmunds	Priest led service	Lay led	Lay led	Lay led	Benefice service on 5 th Sundays, rotating around the churches but it also includes the Methodist Chapel in Iddesleigh.
Dowland – St. Peters	-	-	-	Priest led service	
Iddesleigh – St James	-	Priest led service	-	-	
Monkokehampton – All Saints	-	-	Priest led service	-	

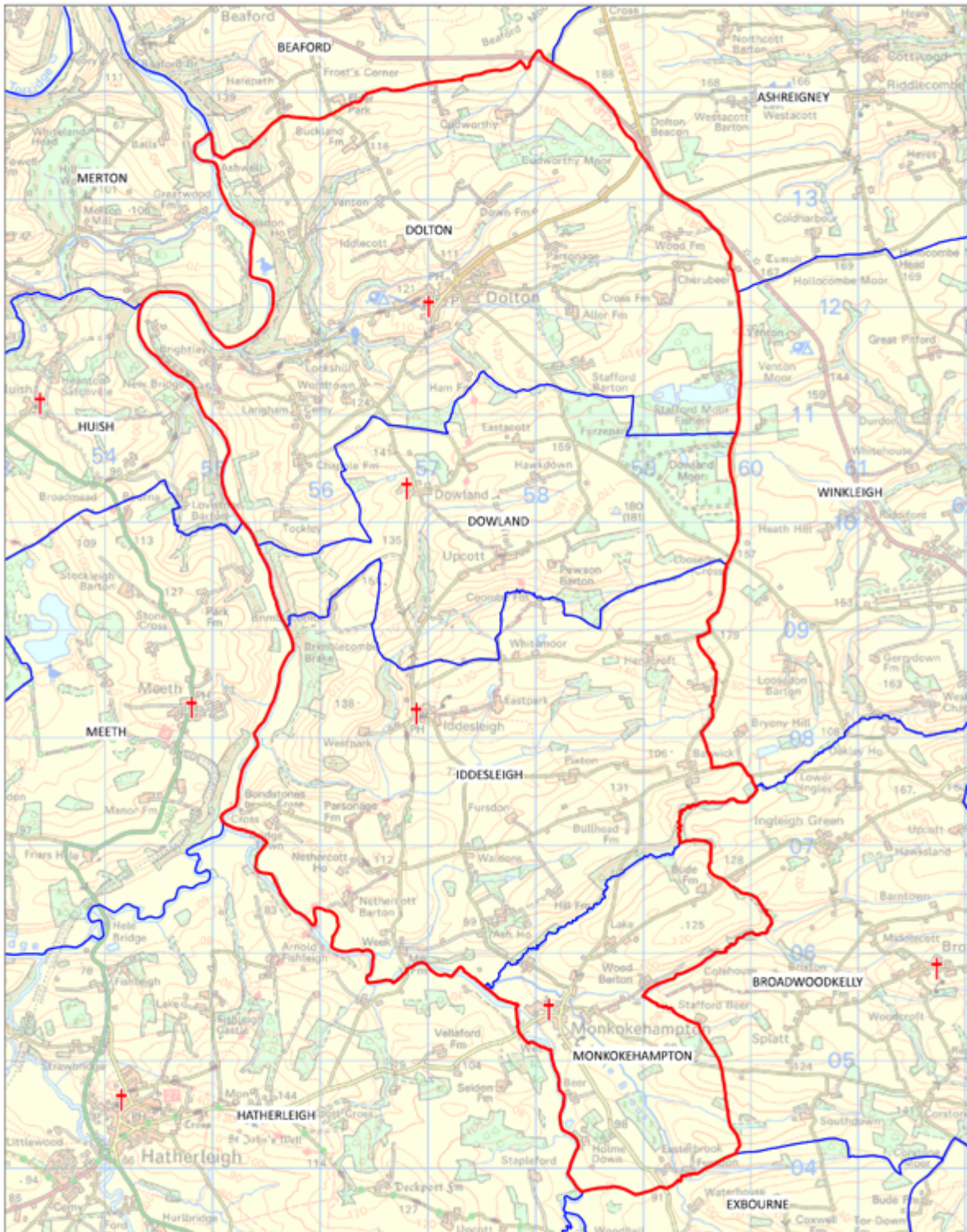
Dolton – As well as one Priest led Sunday Communion, St Edmunds has 3 Sunday morning prayer services and 2 midweek breathing space and Iona morning prayer services – all Lay led.

C. Map showing the location of the Benefice within the South West, England



Map showing the location of the Benefice and surrounding parishes

Torridge 6 Ecumenical Mission Community



This map was compiled for the Diocese of Exeter by Alistair Sutherland in September 2023 with digital data from Field Dynamics. It contains parish data supplied by the Commissioners of the Church of England, church location data from A Church Near You, and Ordnance Survey data reproduced with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. ©Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey licences nos 100040148 and 100019918. Please note that some legal parish names may be abbreviated for clarity.

