



Parish of Cockington

Torbay Deanery

PARISH PROFILE



**St George
& St Mary**
Cockington
Parish of Cockington



St Matthew's
Chelston
Parish of Cockington

FOREWORD

From the Archdeacon of Totnes, The Ven. Douglas Dettmer



At the heart of the English Riviera, the parish of Cockington with Chelston extends from the Torbay seafront with its wide views across the Bay up to beautiful, historic Cockington Park. Thank you for your interest in the appointment to this single-parish, single-PCC benefice whose two church communities have a clear vision for mission through sacramental ministry and pastoral care. The churches need a priest-in-charge who will serve on a 0.5 FTE stipendiary basis to help them 'share the love of God and the peace of Christ' in the local community. He or she will be an enabler of mission through leadership of worship and the cure of souls, equipping the churches for the work of ministry in his or

her teaching, encouragement, and oversight.

The **Right Revd Dr Mike Harrison** became **Bishop of Exeter** in November 2024 and since his arrival has continued to develop our diocesan vision for mission and ministry. Bishop 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 Matthew 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 *whether* 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 about our Diocesan Vision can be found at:
<https://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy/>



Deanery & Diocese

The parish forms part of Torbay Deanery, which overlaps with the local government area of the Torbay unitary authority and includes the three towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. Road and rail links to wider Devon and the rest of the country are especially good, and the glories of the South Devon coast and Dartmoor are close at hand. The parish population like that of Torbay as a whole spans a wide socioeconomic spectrum.

In the diocese of Exeter we aim to be a diverse and truly representative diocesan community and particularly welcome applications from women and from people of global majority heritage. This diocese is a good place to be in ministry, and it is a particularly exciting time of growth and development in our diocesan life. May God bless you as you continue to discern whether you might be called to a ministry in this parish; do be in touch with me directly if you would value a conversation about the post.

With my best wishes,

Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes

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(01626) 832064

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Church family
celebrating centuries of worship.
We have a strong desire to be
relevant in today's world. Our
mission is to bring people of all
ages to God through
sharing the love of God and the
peace of Christ.

Welcome to Cockington

Thank you for reading this and taking the time to consider our parish.

We have been praying on a weekly basis for our new incumbent, whoever you may be.

Before we get to the facts and figures in our profile, we'd like to share with you a bit about us, what we're like, and what our hopes are. All good relationships have chemistry so you need to know about what makes us tick just as much as we would very much like to know more about you.

In a nutshell, we are a welcoming, collaborative bunch of activists. By that we mean we like to get things done. We may not be tender in years but we have a focus and energy that comes from caring deeply what happens to the community at large, our parish and its congregations and the beautiful buildings the care of which we have been entrusted for the next generation. What is important to us is that the love of God is spread within and without the church, and that means drawing people in as well as growing in faith together.

In the last year particularly, we have sought to nurture shoots of growth by engaging in several new initiatives, reaching out to groups and creating relationships which we hope will become increasingly fruitful.

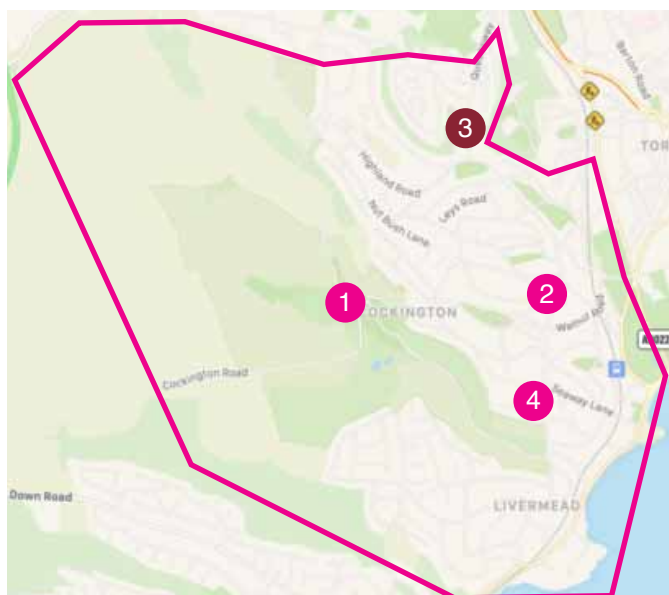
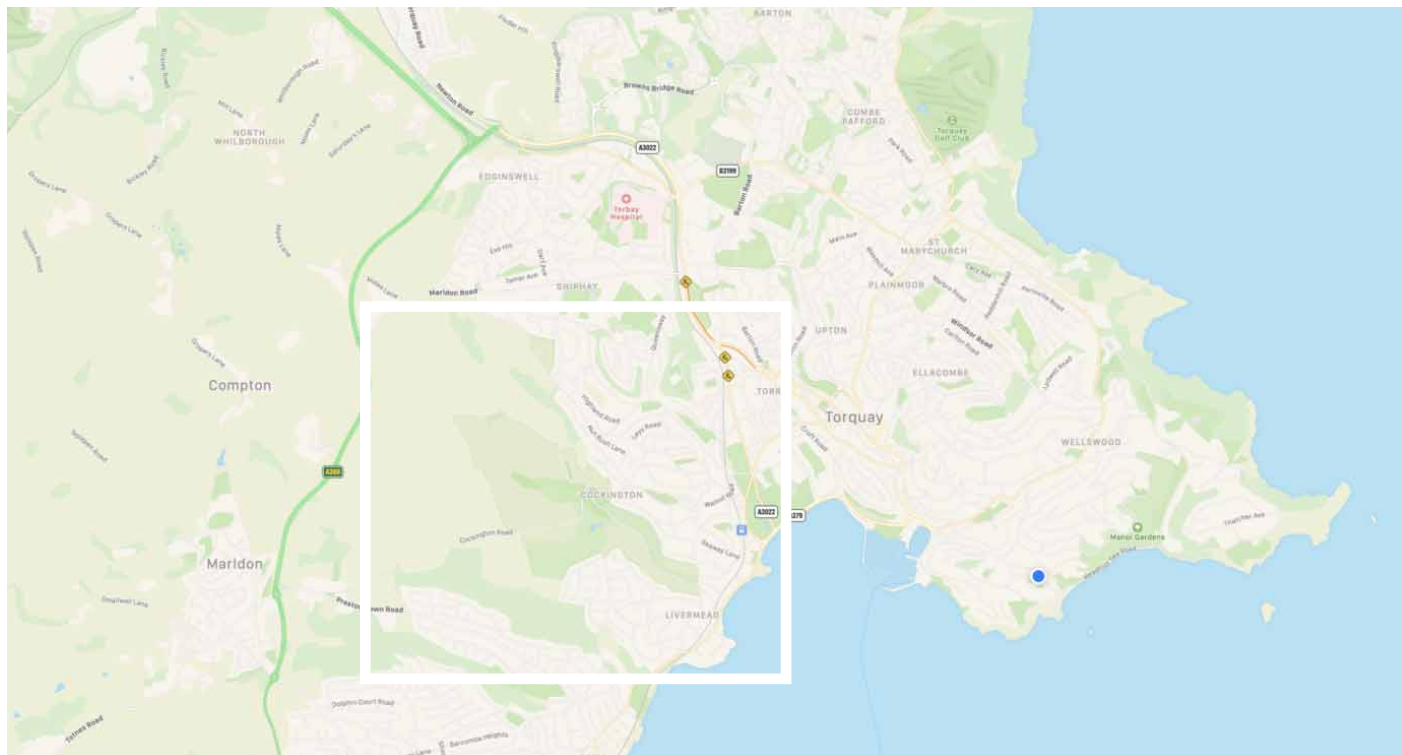
We will talk about this later in the profile, but suffice to say we are very excited by them and have great hopes that our new incumbent will be equally keen to lead and work with us to consolidate and grow what has been achieved.

There is also so much we still want to do.

We by no means have a 100% success rate in everything we try to do, but we do it together and we do it for the love of God.

On balance we're pretty responsible. Finance to fabric to safeguarding, all are managed well. So here now is a little more of the where we are and what we've done: the facts of the matter.

The PCC



1. Cockington Church
2. St Matthew's Church
3. St Peter's Church (see note on page 7)
4. Vicarage

Where we are (our parish)

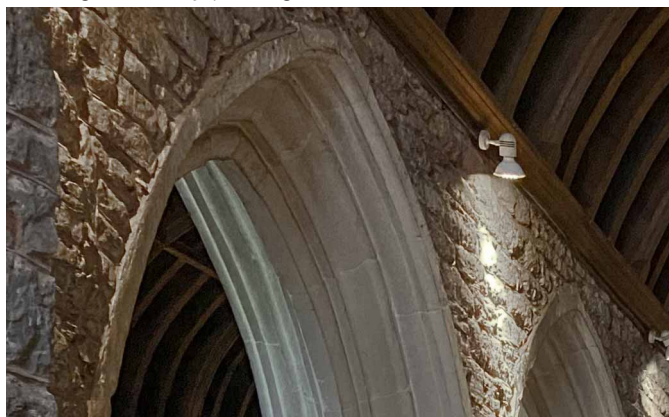
Our parish is on the west of Torquay, one of England's major holiday resorts with a population of over 8,400. It has a mixture of hotels and guest houses, as well as Victorian to modern private housing and a large post-war, formerly council-owned estate.

Cockington Church is located in a small, highly picturesque village with a small population but with a high visitor footfall throughout the year as it has long been a major tourist attraction. The houses in the village are above average in cost for the area and the owners are mostly retired. The row of almshouses within the village is still administered by a Trust.

The immediate area around St Matthew's Church is mainly Victorian housing and it was an influx of people into this area that led to the church being built in the late 1800s.



St George & St Mary (Cockington Parish Church)



St Matthew's Church



Our churches

The parish comprises three contrasting churches - two are active, one is mothballed. The two active churches fulfill slightly different functions due to their locations. Although there are no Church of England schools in the parish, we value our links with Cockington Primary School in Chelston, and there is also a Roman Catholic primary school in Queensway.

St George & St Mary

(commonly known as Cockington Parish Church) Norman in origin, the building was first commenced in 1068 and expanded over the next three centuries. Until 1881 Cockington was a private chapel to Cockington Court which is immediately adjacent. Located in picturesque parkland it is one of the most visited parish churches in Devon.

Of particular note are the pulpit which is reputed to have been salvaged from a Spanish Armada ship grounded in Torbay, as well as the intricately carved rood screen. The Church is open every day and many visitors light a votive candle which contributes generously to the budget! Bells have been a feature at Cockington since the 13th century. Our peal of six bells herald each Sunday service.

Cockington is extremely popular for weddings and baptisms. It also has significant potential given visitors to the house and events in the park.

St Matthew's Church, Chelston

Charles Nicholson. Opened in 1884 it is a prime example of Victorian church architecture and thought to be Sir Charles's best. His brother, Archibald, was responsible for all of the stained glass windows, while the incredibly ornate baptistry was created by Frank Lynn Jenkins.

The church boasts excellent acoustics and is the venue for the majority of the parishes' social and community events.

While St George & St Mary attracts large numbers of visitors, its location means it is less well situated to serve the needs of the broader parish. St Matthew's however is ideally located and is very much seen as our community hub and we have a group of volunteers from the congregation that ensure the grounds and the remembrance garden are well maintained.

Neither church has a graveyard (but both have consecrated ground for the burial of ashes). nor do they have a church hall (although St Matthew's does have an undercroft).



St Peter's Church



The Vicarage

St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church opened in 1962 to serve the rapidly growing area of Chelston. For forty years it was the centre of a lively worshipping community. However, it was converted to a community hub, with sports area, community cafe and meeting rooms around 2010. At the start of the pandemic it was mothballed as it ceased to be viable. Its upkeep has remained the responsibility of the parish, but proposals for the deconsecration and disposal of the building are well advanced in collaboration with the diocese and the local council.

Fabric

Generally the church buildings are maintained (apart from major works) by members of the congregation and as such are in relatively good condition for buildings of their age. There are reserved funds for roof maintenance which have been used in part for refurbishment of the roof at Cockington church.

Vicarage

This five-bedroom house is situated in a quiet close within five minutes' drive of all three of the churches and is in good condition. The views from the front of the house look right across Torbay to Brixham and Berry Head.



Indoor Christmas Market at St Matthews



Summer fayre



Who we are and what we've been up to

There are 52 members on our electoral roll. We have a churchwarden and a number of assistant wardens ensure that there are strong teams at both churches. Our PCC has 9 members and meets about every three months.

The church-going demographic of Torbay is heavily weighted towards the over 60s (and that is reflected in our congregations) yet we believe there is potential to grow our congregation by attracting both older and younger age groups, especially families.

At the heart of what we do is sharing the love of Christ and we do that in various ways and with all ages:

A number of our parishioners visit those who are sick or housebound, and go out of their way to provide transport for those who would otherwise not be able to attend.

We run a regular Friday morning shop and monthly cafe which serves as a 'touching place' for the community and those who need to share. It is an ideal opportunity to welcome people in to an informal gathering where they can find companionship and experience the love of our Lord.

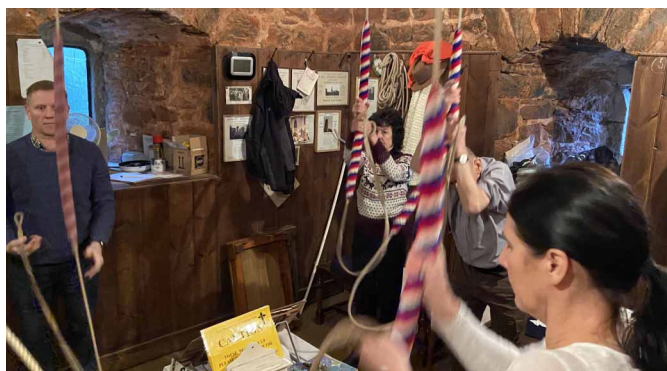
Newcomers, whether for an event or regular worship, are warmly welcomed into the church family and a number of our wedding couples have returned following their big day.

This year we have had several markets at St Matthew's, with a number of stalls run by non church-goers in our community. The markets are always very inclusive and happy events, as well as contributing to church funds.

Other social events, include Apple Day at Cockington which attracts families from around the bay and beyond. More recently the church has become an integral stakeholder in a newly formed group (along with the Court, the Council, the Village and Traders) whose role is to co-operate and collab-orate in drawing the community closer together.



Crib service



Cockington bellringers



Mulled wine at Carol service



Church shop

Who we are and what we've been up to (cont.)

Becoming familiar and accessible to everyone is an important part of our witness. For that reason we held a lay service of carols and readings (one was scripture) which was preceded by mulled wine and shortbread biscuit. Over 140 people attended and there was participation from the local traders and community. Equally we made St Matthew's available for a local school to hold their carol services (in shifts!).

We have a great awareness of those within the larger community who, although not members of the church, are active collectors for the local food bank and committed to supporting welfare issues.

We have good relations with our neighbouring parishes and would hope that the new incumbent would foster an even closer relationship with them.

We envisage and eagerly anticipate that in the not too distant future we will become part of a wider mission community, with all the opportunities and challenges which that will present.

Cockington Parish Churches was live.
December 24, 2022 at 1:59 PM · 🌐



Reach more people with this video
You could reach up to 730 people daily by boosting your video for £14.

Cockington Parish Churches
October 15, 2022 · 🌐

Don't forget tomorrow is Apple Day at Cockington and we'll be starting the day with a special family service at 10.00am. Hope you can join us!

COCKINGTON COURT
Join us for a fun family day out!
2022 COCKINGTON APPLE DAY
Sunday 16 October 2022 11am - 4pm FREE ENTRY
Plenty of local cider, beer and delicious hot and cold food stalls
Live music, Entertainment, crafts and activities for all the family
There will be an apple themed church service taking place at Cockington Church @10am. All Welcome.
Cockington Court, Centre of Creativity Cockington, Torquay TQ2 6XA
Cockington Court Craft Centre @CockingtonCourt
01803 607230 www.cockingtoncourt.org info@cockingtoncourt.org
Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust

Technology and outreach

Technology and social media have facilitated our outreach and offers great potential for furthering engagement with our community and beyond.

New websites were created in 2022 and are continuing to gain traction, and through which we receive a number of enquiries. Together with this we have been steadily building our following on both Facebook and Instagram and are seen as an essential part of growing our outreach.

Eventbrite is another online channel which we use to advertise and manage the Carols by Candlelight services on Christmas Eve (approx. 700 booked). We now intend to engage this group by email and are looking to reactivate the currently semi-dormant 'Friends of Cockington' as a vehicle to do so.

We have also joined Nextdoor an online neighbourhood community which enables us to target locals in the immediate vicinity of our churches.



Our worship

Our parish sees worship as a priority. We meet to worship throughout the week, making use of beautiful spaces in both churches. Services are usually Eucharistic. We also place importance on Home Communion, and hope to build a team to develop this further.

We have a monthly all-age service to encourage a wider participation in worship with our baptism families in mind.

At Cockington Church the service on a Sunday uses the traditional language and has a typical congregation of 20 - 30. It has a popular mid-week noon communion service which attracts up to 12 regular communicants but swells in the summer months with the addition of visitors. At St Matthew's Church we hold a modern language service also with approximately 20 - 30 worshippers.

We also hold several special services. There is an annual Valentines Service for couples to be married that year. Our Christmas Carols by Candlelight services which are held at 2pm 4pm and 6pm on Christmas Eve (each attract around 250 participants). Our Confirmation and Advent services have been held more recently at St Matthew's as well as Midnight Mass. We are eager to explore a wide range of Christian traditions and increase our appeal across all age groups.

Kids Church, is one such initiative which takes place once a month. We have also made particular effort to engage with the young families and our Ark activity centre at Cockington is a good example of that intention in action.

We have a committed, versatile organist supporting a wide range of worship music in both churches. Our small, but highly dedicated choir is supplemented by singers from other parishes on special occasions.



Our finances and admin

We are not a rich parish, but neither are we poor and what we have is carefully managed. There are no financial black holes (to our best knowledge!). Parish income in 2025 was

£67,000 plus £11,000 VAT return from roof refurbishment.

We are proud that we meet our common fund contribution in full each year. Most giving from parishoners is via standing order.

There are also various reserve funds for maintenance of the fabric.

We have several ongoing fund raising activites including a church shop which raises £80 - £90 a week. Activities such as our Christmas Indoor Market at St Matthew's, Votive candles and electronic giving at Cockington raise in excess

of £10,000 per annum.

Accessing fundraising on a larger scale is also underway. We are currently one of only five churches that the Diocese has prioritised for funding that maybe be forthcoming from the Historic England Places of Worship Renewal fund.

On a more general note we also have a paid administrator who deals with bookings and invoices for weddings and funerals and works closely with the treasurer to ensure that everything is paid in on time and the quarterly returns are completed.

She also deals with all DBS and safeguarding administration documentation/compliance for which is in good order.

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Welcome to St George and St Mary, or as it is more commonly known Cockington Parish Church. For over 950 years it has survived not only all that mother nature has thrown at it, but also other interruptions such as the Reformation and wars both civil and global. But through it all Cockington Church has prevailed and the building you see today remains virtually unchanged from c.1400.

Yet the battle continues. Loving and often costly maintenance on the fabric is ongoing. Added to which there are the expenses associated with keeping the church open every day of the year. In 2021 these amounted to £142 a day. We receive no external financial support to cover costs. It is only the generosity of parishoners and visitors such as yourself that help preserve this beautiful building for future generations. Therefore for every pound we receive we are truly grateful. And the dragon is too.

Thank you. DONATIONS CAN BE MADE VIA THE ADJACENT TERMINAL ►

Fundraising banner in Cockington Church



Torquay



Walnut Road, Chelston



Cockington Village



Cockington Court

The English Riviera – a beautiful challenge

For many the thought of moving to Torquay is a dream fulfilled. It has one of the most pleasant climates in the country and of course is located in beautiful South Devon, one of the prime holiday destinations in the UK. With beaches aplenty and Dartmoor on its doorstep it offers much for all ages.

It has some excellent schools and the cost of living is lower than other parts of the country. Summer of course sees the town at its busiest and tourists join us at our Sunday services. Yet there is a more difficult side to the bay too.

Like many coastal economies where hospitality is the major employer and minimum wage the norm, there are areas of deprivation; one ward in a neighbouring parish is ranked as one of the poorest in the country.

That said Torbay has qualified for substantial government assistance in its “levelling up” strategy and the resort has seen an upturn in investment with the construction of several new hotels. Nevertheless the current recession is proving difficult for many families and there too will lie a challenge for our churches and the communities they serve.



Our hope

We know that a perfect match does not exist. What does, however, is a meeting of minds, a shared hope, an ambition to grow and a mutual accommodation. In our interregnum we have met regularly, taken care of our churches and congregations, and started new initiatives.

We would welcome wholeheartedly and support someone who can come with us and lead us on our journey.

So, having said that, we hope that you would be:

Open-hearted, open-minded - and with a good sense of humour!

Ready to listen, to encourage, to share - and to act!

An inspiration to our parish – living and sharing the love of God in the community

Prayerful - and helping us to be the same

Our shepherd - filled with the love, generosity (and forgiveness!) of God

Our teacher - keen to share and explore our faith further

Ready to jump right in.

We want to bring more people in to learn a little about the love of God. We really want to meet you.

In conclusion

We would hope that our priest would be able to make full use of both churches, with the help of a willing congregation, both for worship and also for outreach in all its various forms.

We would welcome a priest who would feel able to engage with the realities and problems of daily life, both in leading our services and in reaching out to those of all ages in our parish. Pastoral work is something we place importance on, encouraging and supporting people with the love of God, and helping more people to come to know about our Christian faith. We hope that our incumbent would lead us in this.

We are very much looking forward to working alongside a kindred spirit who will stir up the Holy Spirit not only in our congregation but in the community at large.

Amen.

