

Summer 2026

This community is looking for a
Rector to join us in East Devon
Not far from the Jurassic Coast – the
next best thing to Heaven

Five parishes make up our group,
good links by rail and road
Lay teams, Archdeacon, LLMs, will
help to ease the load

We want a person who will lead,
inspire us and relate
To the needs of our five parishes,
with prayers: that would be great
Able to communicate in a friendly,
fun-filled way
To join in our activities in Church at
work and play

A 4-bed Vicarage is yours, with
garden and great views
A selection of good schools around
so let the children choose.....

So, if you think that helping folks
and praying is the norm

Sit down, get your pen out and
please fill in our form!

www.fivealive.org

FB: Five Alive Mission Community

Why Five Alive Mission Community?



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A Message from Bishop Mike, Bishop of Exeter

Our vision in this diocese is that of Jesus in His Great Commission. We aspire to appoint leaders of our Christian communities who practice the presence of our Lord and enable others to do so; leaders who witness, act and relate in ways which make disciples and enable others to do so; leaders who serve in ways which intrigue, attract and engage the wider community, and enable others to do so. In short – pray, grow and serve!



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

So we are looking for ministerial leaders who

- are intentionally missional, helping their Christian community to discern who God is sending them to, and who God is sending them.
- are developing missional habits and confidence in the faith for members of their congregations, enabling them to be invitational and ambassadorial
- invest in their own discipleship and well-being, and that of those in their care
- cultivate vocations, lay and ordained, actively recruiting for initiatives such as the Foundations course and the Exeter Ordination Pathway
- place children and young people at the heart of our mission, orienting churches to be ever-more welcoming spaces for young people, using existing resources and networks, but also being pioneering in outlook
- experiment with ways of being and doing church that engage the unengaged – we encourage ambitious plans such as creating two new worshipping communities in the first three years of a new ministry.

You can expect to find

- support from senior leaders committed to enabling this mission and ministry
- an outstanding diocesan team, second to none in terms of training provision and opportunities, comms understanding, finance expertise, buildings experience and care for our ministers
- opportunities for personal and professional development in alignment with the vision of the Great Commission
- a warm, relational diocese, where diversity is welcomed and honoured
- a good-humoured, joyful, energetic culture grateful for the privilege of being called into ministry and supportive of missional experimentation, risk-taking and ‘having a go’

If you’re still reading then I suspect we might be on the same page and I pray that the Holy Spirit might inform, shape and direct your discernment concerning this post.



The Archdeacon's Foreword

Welcome and thank you for your interest in this post

This post offers an exciting opportunity to lead the Five Alive Mission Community, a group of five distinctive rural parishes in the beautiful East Devon countryside. Rooted in their local communities and rich traditions, the churches are committed to working together, building on strong foundations, and growing in mission, discipleship and service.

Like many rural churches, the Mission Community faces challenges, including an ageing demographic, sustaining ministry across a dispersed benefice, and caring for historic buildings. Yet there is also real hope. The churches are financially stable, supported by dedicated lay leaders and volunteers, and open to fresh expressions of church while valuing their Anglican heritage.

We are seeking a prayerful and inspiring priest who will lead collaboratively, encourage others in ministry, nurture children and families, and help the churches discern God's call for the next chapter. You will be supported by a committed ministry team, strong school and community links; an Area Bishop who has the well-being of the clergy and the mission of our church among children and families as priorities; and an Archdeacon who will support your ministry practically and pastorally. Together, you will help these parishes flourish.

We are committed to being a diverse and representative diocese and warmly welcome applications from women and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Devon is not only a beautiful place to call home, but it is also a diocese where community, creativity, and collaboration thrive.

If you would like a confidential conversation about this post, please do get in touch. We look forward to welcoming you to the Diocese of Exeter.



The Archdeacon of Exeter

The Venerable Andrew Beane

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The Bishop of Crediton

The Rt. Rev'd Moira Astin

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Overview

- Population: 1.2m,
- 120 Mission Communities
- 483 parishes, 594 churches
- Worshipping community of 20,000



Served By

- 3 Bishops
- 4 Archdeaconries
- 188 Stipendiary clergy
- 54 SSMs, 197 LLMs,
- 134 church schools



3 Major Urban Areas

- Plymouth (population: 265,000)
- Exeter (population: 135,000)
- Torbay (population: 141,000)



Coastal & Market Towns

- Over 50 towns (population: 373,000)
- 5 large towns (population: > 20,000)
- 14 towns (population: > 10,000)
- Expected to grow by 40,000



Our Five Missional Priorities



Looking Ahead Together -The Future of Five Alive

As Five Alive begins the process of appointing a new incumbent, there is naturally a mixture of emotions across the Mission Community: sadness at saying goodbye, uncertainty about the future, but also genuine confidence in the work already done and hope about what comes next.

Conversations held across the benefice have been honest, thoughtful, practical - and often full of humour too. There is a strong sense that Five Alive is in a healthier and stronger place than it has been for many years, with committed people, flourishing relationships and a willingness to embrace change where needed.

Churchwardens, together with helping clergy and the wider team, are working hard to provide continuity, support and communication during the vacancy period, including opportunities for regular catchups bringing all five individual parishes together as one and building strength at the core of the Mission Community.

The overall feeling is that this appointment matters deeply - and should be approached prayerfully and wisely.

*A time of change.
A future of hope.*

- Honest
- Thoughtful
- Practical
- Humorous

FAITH
COMMUNITY
HOPE

Sadness at saying goodbye
Uncertainty about the future
Confidence in our journey
Hope for what's next

Five Alive is in a healthier and stronger place than it has been for many years.

Committed people. Flourishing relationships. Willingness to embrace change.

Conversations across the benefice have been honest, thoughtful, practical - and often full of humour too.

Churchwardens, helping clergy and the wider team are working hard to provide continuity, support and communication during the vacancy period.

Continuity Support Communication

Regular catchups bring all five parishes together as one, building strength at the core of our Mission Community.

Kilminster
Shute & Whitford
Dalwood
Stockland
Yarcombe

Five Alive

One Mission Community. Five Places. One Purpose.

This appointment matters deeply.
Let us pray, listen and discern together.



Looking Ahead Together-What Are We Looking For?

When asked what qualities were most important in a new incumbent, the answers came quickly and consistently.

The benefice is praying for someone who is:

- Prayerful and spiritually rooted
- Inspirational and encouraging
- A good communicator and teacher across all generations
- Comfortable in rural life and community presence
- Warm, adaptable, approachable and compassionate
- A strong but collaborative leader
- Supportive of children and families
- Able to listen well
- Confident enough to say “no” when necessary
- Passionate about mission and growth
- Grounded in scripture while able to connect with different audiences
- Supportive of traditional forms of worship

Above all, we are looking for someone authentic - someone who will share life with the community rather than simply manage it.

Looking Ahead Together- Looking Forward

The wider Diocese, under the guidance of Bishop Mike Harrison, has identified five key priorities for future development:

- Missional leadership
- A stronger mission-focused culture
- Encouraging vocations
- Children and families
- “Mixed ecology” church - finding new ways of being church alongside traditional worship

The Mission Community is proud of its beautiful churches , its strong community roots, active lay leadership, openness to fresh ideas, deep care for one another and surprising amount of laughter and there is already clear evidence of these priorities being lived out in practical and creative ways. The following table outlines this evidence:



Missional Leadership	A Mission-Focused Culture	Encouraging Vocations	Children and Families	Mixed Ecology Church
Leadership is shared widely across the benefice and includes ordained and lay people who encourage, inspire and sustain the life of the churches. This includes: • The Rector and Ministry Team • Churchwardens and PCC members • Congregational worship leaders • Home group and support group leaders • Volunteers who enable ministry, hospitality and pastoral care There is a strong culture of collaboration, encouragement and mutual support across the six churches.	The churches are continually asking how they can strengthen their Christian presence within their communities and share the gospel in accessible ways. Examples include: • Commitment to Eco Church, with two churches holding Bronze awards and three holding Silver awards • Village Fayre Church initiatives • St Peter's Day BBQs open to all parishioners • Regular engagement through baptisms, weddings and funerals - averaging one life event per week across the year • Shared services with other denominations, including Songs of Praise with Methodists in Dalwood and Palm Sunday worship with Baptists in Kilmingston and Yarcombe These activities demonstrate churches that are visible, outward-looking and rooted in village life.	Five Alive actively encourages people to explore and develop both ordained and lay vocations. In the last five years the Mission Community has: • Supported three Licensed Lay Ministers • Supported one ordinand • Encouraged one person into lay ministry training • Seen one person complete the Diocesan one-year course Lay leadership is embedded throughout the churches, including leading intercessions, reading scripture and helping to lead worship. Some services are regularly lay-led, including the bi-monthly Celebrate service and seasonal worship such as the Easter "carol" service.	The benefice demonstrates a strong commitment to children, young people and families through both church and school connections. This includes: • Employing a part-time Children and Families Outreach Worker • Dedicated children's areas in each church building • Family trails and activities both inside and outside churches There are strong links with local schools through: • Collective worship and assemblies • "Open the Book" • Year 6 leavers' work including It's Your Move • School use of church buildings for music lessons, assemblies and services • Foundation Local Advocate support in Stockland Connections also extend to pre-school settings through storytelling, visits and nursery engagement	The Mission Community already reflects a rich and varied pattern of worship and ministry, combining traditional forms of church with newer and more creative expressions. This includes: • Book of Common Prayer services • Common Worship services • Choral Evensong with Gregorian chant • Forest Church in outdoor settings • Celebrate services for adults with additional needs • Festival worship throughout the Christian year • Agricultural services such as Rogation, Plough Sunday and Harvest celebrations on local farms • Mission Community services rotating around the six churches

Together these show a benefice that values tradition while remaining open to fresh expressions of church and community engagement.

The next chapter will undoubtedly bring change, but there is a growing sense that Five Alive is ready for it. There is energy, faith, realism and hope across the benefice, and we look forward to welcoming the person who is called to lead us into this next season.



Welcome to the Five Alive Mission Community: Who We Are

We are the Five Alive Mission Community - a caring, committed, unique collection of five beautiful churches (and one much-loved chapel) scattered across some of the most stunning countryside in East Devon. All parishes have charm and character.

Our parishes - Dalwood, Kilminster, Shute & Whitford, Stockland and Yarcombe - all have their own distinct personality, traditions and rhythms of life, but together we share a deep sense of community, hospitality and faith.

If we were a gathered church we would have seen over 420 people at Christmas, more than 130 on Mothering Sunday, and an attendance of c.90 people every Sunday.

Between us we have:

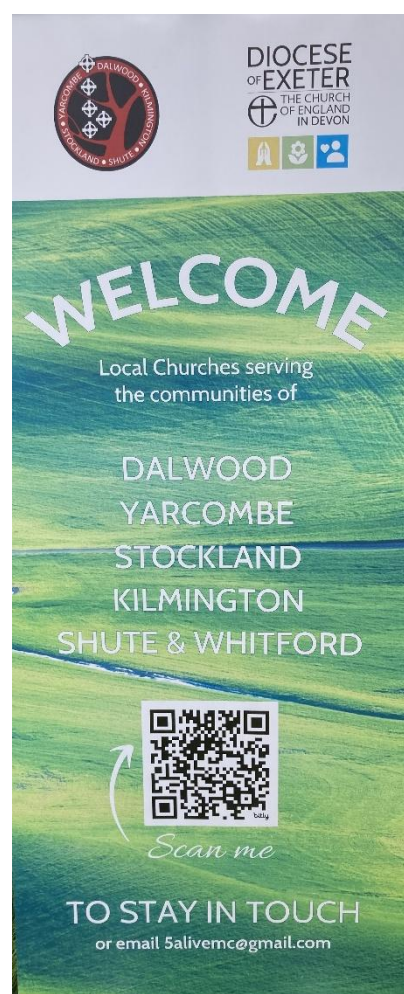
- Five welcoming parish churches and a thriving chapel
- Dedicated churchwardens, PCCs, treasurers and safeguarding representatives in every parish
- A strong organisational and administrative core - for support
- A wonderfully active family worker helping us connect with children, schools and young families

We're surrounded by rolling farmland, woodland, winding lanes and spectacular views in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - with the Jurassic Coast practically on the doorstep. Exeter, Taunton, rail links to London, and Exeter Airport are all easily accessible, although life here definitely moves at a gentler pace.

Our benefice stretches around 14 miles from Whitford in the south to Yarcombe in the north. Travelling between villages can occasionally feel like an adventure rally through Devon lanes avoiding the potholes - but nobody complains (much!) because the scenery is glorious.

The Five Alive parishes are supported by strong and active community spirit, with volunteers playing a vital role in village and church life.

Our Churches are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of our ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult. Each has robust guidelines, policies and procedures in place.



Together, the parishes offer a welcoming, caring and deeply connected community life. Three of our parishes have thriving primary schools, and our Open the Book team regularly visits to bring Bible stories, laughter and energy into school life. Alongside this, Forest Church and other initiatives are helping us grow connections with younger families who are increasingly making these villages home.

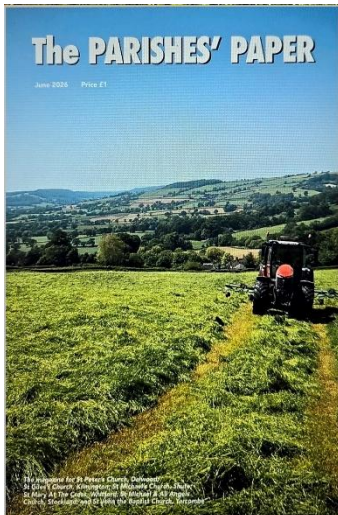
Thank you for helping us understand things we did not understand....

Maisie (7)

While many residents are retired, there's also a growing mix of commuters, home-workers, farmers, gardeners, small business owners and creative folk. Village life remains vibrant, with lunches, fairs, music, markets, flower shows, jazz clubs, duck races, terrier races and more cups of tea or coffee than anyone can reasonably count.

And there is always something happening.

Amongst many other things, Five Alive includes:



- Forest Church adventures
- A monthly Parishes Paper helping everyone stay connected
- Coffee mornings and community lunches
- Lent groups and Bible studies
- Bell ringing and bell training
- Rogation walks, Harvest celebrations and Christmas festivals
- Terrier Racing, Duck Races and Lamb Bingo
- Prayer chains and pastoral care
- Litter picks and practical community action
- Open churches throughout daylight hours
- Friendly welcomes and excellent refreshments
- Cheeky Pandas, school links and children's activities
- Healthy partnerships with many other churches

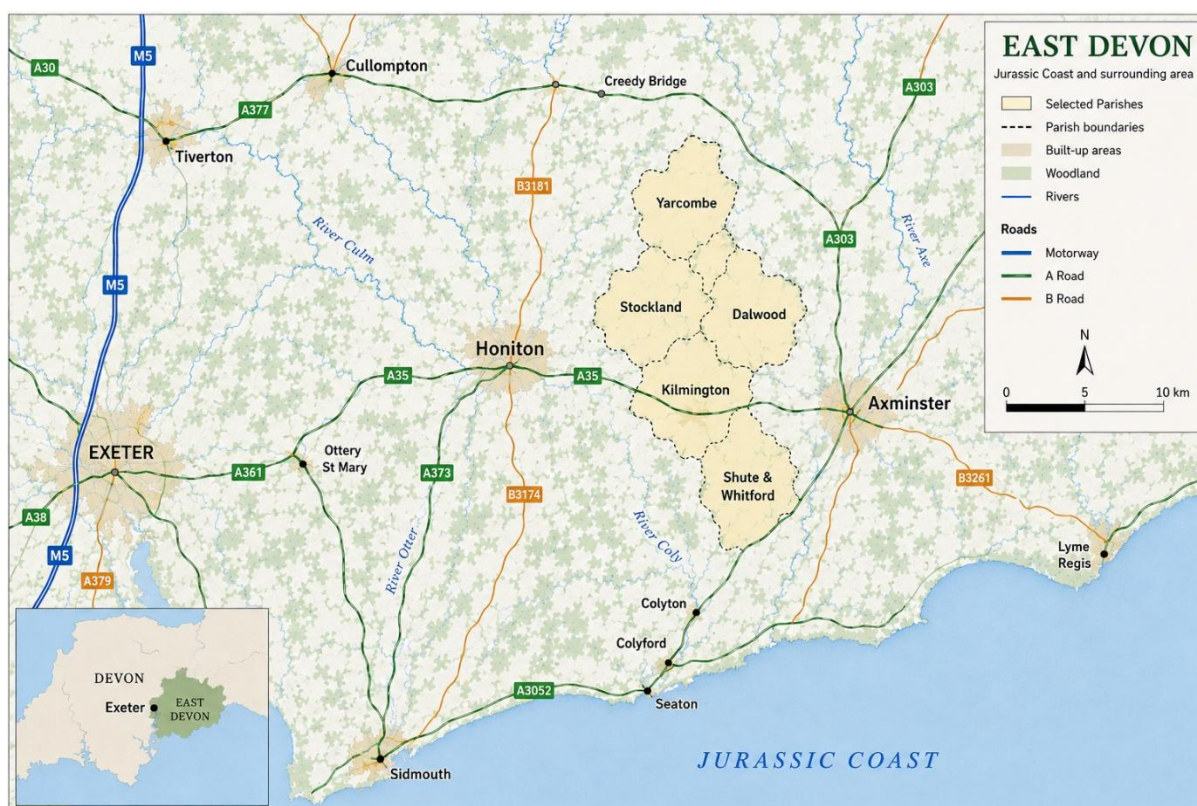
We are financially sound, ecologically aware and open to change, while still deeply valuing tradition, prayer and community life. We try hard to notice people, listen well and make newcomers feel genuinely welcome.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a lot of fun and laughter here. As one member summed it up, 'Five Alive has a great deal to offer' - faith, friendship, beautiful buildings, people committed to God, to one another, to making church life work, and plenty of events that bring communities together.



Five Alive Mission Community: Where We Are

Location & Accessibility



All five parishes are close to the A30 and A35 providing convenient access to Exeter, the airport and the M5. The nearby towns of Axminster and Honiton offer strong facilities and amenities for families. The stunning Jurassic close is a short drive away as are Exmoor, Dartmoor and South Devon. The map is AI generated to give context to our position in the wider area.

Dalwood is a rural village with good transport links via local country lanes. It is h Axminster (4.8 miles) and Honiton (6.3 miles)

Kilminster combines rural charm with excellent accessibility adjacent to the A35 and just a few minutes' drive away from the A35.

Shute is a historic rural parish located approximately 3 miles west of Axminster, just off the A35. **Whitford** lies a few miles south on the west bank of the River Axe, 10 miles from Axminster and closer to the coast and nearby villages such as Colyton.

Yarcombe, is situated alongside the A30 within the Blackdown Hills, surrounded by farmland and open countryside. The parish includes the small hamlet of Marsh.

Stockland is a lively village positioned just off Stockland Hill, a 7-mile stretch joining the A30 in the north to the A35 in the south.



Five Alive Mission Community: What Makes Us Five Alive?

It is clear that this benefice is about far more than buildings and rotas. It is about people: people working together to support each other in the name of God.

Five Alive, as a whole, is:

- Friendly and welcoming
- Financially sound
- Ecologically aware
- Open to change
- Full of enthusiasm, resilience and fun

As Archdeacon Andrew Beane summarised:

“Five Alive has a great deal to offer - lots of fun, laughter and events that attract people.”

Five Alive Mission Community: Our Vision

Our vision for 2026 is to grow as a united, prayerful, welcoming and outward-looking Mission Community, rooted in our villages, our shared history and our faith in Jesus Christ. We believe God has placed us in our parishes for a purpose, and we are called to work together to discover and live out that purpose.

At the heart of our vision are four priorities: worship, welcome, witness and wellbeing.

Over the coming years we aim to:

- Go deeper in faith through prayer, worship, Bible learning and discipleship.
- Strengthen partnerships across the Five Alive churches, sharing gifts, skills and leadership together.
- Reach out creatively to our villages, especially children, families, young people and those on the fringes of church life.
- Experiment and take risks by embracing change, exploring new ways of worship and finding fresh ways to share God's love.



Five Alive Mission Community: What's Great?



Five Alive Mission Community: Our Challenges

Alongside the positives, the team are also honest about the realities of rural church life:

- An ageing population in many congregations
- A decreasing number of volunteers carrying increasing responsibility
- The need to adapt worship styles to engage a wider range of people and ages
- Questions around technology and digital communication
- The significant travel and workload pressures faced by clergy in a widespread rural benefice
- The need for sustainable governance and clearer priorities

There is also recognition that the future may need to involve thinking creatively and realistically about mission and ministry in order to support the next incumbent:

- More collaboration across parishes (without losing individuality), for example, reducing duplication and unnecessary meetings
- More joint services to make clergy workload more realistic
- Greater flexibility in worship patterns careful use of time and energy making better use of retired clergy and lay leadership, continuing to strengthen the wide ministry team
- A willingness to stop doing some things in order to do other things better

Five Alive already has strong foundations, gifted lay people and committed volunteers. The challenge is to use those gifts wisely and collaboratively.



Our Churches: Dalwood

Community & Village Life

Dalwood has a population of around 460 people and is known for being a caring and active community. Village life centres around the well-equipped Village Hall and a range of local clubs, activities, and organisations.

Key annual and regular events include:

- Annual Music Day in July, hosted across the church, village hall, and other venues
- Dalwood Fair in August, held under a Royal Charter dating back to the 15th century
- Community Duck Race and annual 10k run
- St Peter's Day celebrations with BBQ and family activities
- Monthly Community Lunch supporting connection and church fundraising
- Monthly Jazz Club
- The Tucker's Arms pub, a popular social hub dating from the 14th century

The Church Building

St Peter's Church has medieval origins, with the current building dating from the 15th century. Significant refurbishment took place in 1881 through local fundraising efforts.

The church is:

- In good condition and well maintained
- Overseen by an active fabric committee
- Open daily during daylight hours
- Equipped with a small children's area

The church benefits from:

- Volunteer cleaning and grounds teams
- Hospitality after Sunday services
- Two churchwardens
- An active PCC and supporting sub-committees

Worship & Services

The church currently holds:

- Weekly Sunday services at 11am
- Monthly weekday services on Wednesdays at 9.30am
- A mixture of clergy-led and lay-led worship



Special services throughout the year include:

- Annual Pet Service
- Rogation and Harvest services hosted at local farms
- Seasonal and community-led worship events

Lay involvement in worship is strong and valued within the parish.

Congregation & Participation

- Active volunteer involvement across worship, hospitality, maintenance, and events
 - Strong integration between church and wider village life
-

Current Priorities & Future Development

The church is currently exploring environmentally sustainable alternatives to oil-fired central heating as part of its Eco Church commitment.

Our Churches: Kilminster

Community & Village Life

With a population of approximately 900, Kilminster is a caring and active village with a strong community spirit and a wide range of clubs, organisations and local activities.

Village life centres around:

- The Parish Church of St Giles
- The Baptist Church, Kilminster
- The village primary school
- The playing fields and community facilities
- Millers Farm Shop
- Two local pubs
- A weekly Post Office service

The village is within the catchment area for Colyton Grammar School and several other highly regarded secondary schools.

The church plays a significant role within village life and maintains strong ecumenical links with The Baptist Church, including joint services during the year.



The Church Building

There is evidence of Christian worship on the site dating back to 937AD, with the current church originating in the 12th century.

Over the centuries:

- The tower was added in the 14th century
- Six bells were installed between 1672 and 1845
- The body of the church was rebuilt in 1862
- The churchyard was extended in 2000
- Significant improvements were completed in 2006–2007, including a north porch, toilet facilities and a kitchen area at the rear of the church

The parish is currently pursuing plans to install solar panels as part of its commitment towards Net Zero and environmental sustainability.

The church benefits from:

- Two churchwardens
- An active PCC and sub-committees
- A choir
- A growing team of bellringers

The building remains both historically significant and actively used by the community.

Worship & Services

Weekly worship takes place across the wider Mission Community alongside regular midweek services.

Attendance varies depending on the style of worship, with large congregations gathering for special seasonal services and community celebrations, for example Remembrance Sunday.

The parish values both traditional worship and creative, community-based celebrations.

Congregation & Participation

The congregation includes many retirees, with younger families attending particularly for special services and events.



The church supports a wide range of regular activities including:

- Friday Coffee Shop
- Weekly Knit and Natter group
- “Let’s Celebrate” services for people with additional needs
- Lay-led study groups and training sessions
- Poetry groups
- Mother and toddler gatherings
- Friends of St Giles Churchyard

There is strong volunteer involvement and a growing culture of participation across church life.

Current Priorities & Future Development

Kilminster is seeking to balance heritage, mission and sustainability as it looks towards the future.

Current priorities include:

- Continuing progress towards Net Zero through solar panel installation
- Maintaining healthy finances while planning for restoration costs
- Encouraging wider participation and volunteering
- Strengthening engagement with families and younger generations
- Supporting community outreach

The parish remains financially stable, supported through:

- Direct debit giving
- Contactless donations
- Fundraising events such as concerts, quizzes, coffee mornings and harvest suppers
- Ongoing grant applications

Kilminster combines a rich history with a lively and forward-looking community spirit.



Our Churches: Shute & Whitford

Community & Village Life

Shute with Whitford has a population of c. 600 people. Community life centres around The Parish Church of St Michael, the local primary school, The National Trust manor house, Shute Barton and the village of Whitford, served by St Mary at the Cross chapel.

Although the parish has experienced the gradual loss of some rural amenities such as shops and pubs, the community remains warm, engaged, and supportive.

The demographic is generally older, though younger families are increasingly moving into the area from urban centres. The primary school draws children from surrounding parishes and maintains strong links with the church through:

- Assemblies
- Music and seasonal events
- Nativity and Harvest celebrations
- Regular visits from the Open the Book team

St Michael's, Shute: The parish church dates back to at least 1200 and offers a traditional and contemplative style of worship rooted in the Book of Common Prayer tradition. Key features include:

- Historic Grade 1 Listed building
- War Monuments and a rare statue dedicated to Sir William Pole, 4th Baronet of Shute
- Architectural features with modern facilities for hospitality

The church values offering a reflective and historic pattern of worship for those drawn to traditional Anglican spirituality. It has demonstrated strong community engagement, notably through a long-running cultural festival, which for around a decade attracted large audiences and helped put Shute firmly on the map as an active and outward-looking community.

St Mary at the Cross, Whitford: St Mary's is a small, now thriving, chapel of ease consecrated in 1908. After a period of limited use, it has experienced significant renewal in recent years through the commitment of volunteers and a growing congregation (currently 20-30 worshippers per service despite the small population. Playing a vital role in community life, with strong links to local events such as the Flowerpot Festival and children's activities, its welcoming, inclusive atmosphere draws many residents to monthly worship, including those who would not necessarily describe themselves as practising Christians.



The chapel currently offers informal worship (monthly), unaccompanied hymn singing, Christmas Eve celebrations and a close-knit and engaged worship community.

The relationship between the parish church and chapel is one of strong mutual support, including shared worship and an annual Rogation walk between the two churches.

"I like to feel the presence of people who have worshipped in our Chapel many years ago. I like the relaxed service and welcoming atmosphere. And it's warm!"

Worship & Services

Worship across the parish reflects both traditional Anglican liturgy and informal community-focused gatherings.

Current worship includes:

- Book of Common Prayer services
- Traditional Holy Communion
- Choral Evensong with Gregorian Chant
- Monthly informal chapel services at Whitford: "It brought me back to church"
- Seasonal and shared parish events

The parish values both reverence and hospitality, combining traditional worship with an inclusive welcome.

Congregation & Participation

- Growing and engaged congregations across both worship centres
- Strong volunteer involvement
- Good links with the local school and wider community
- Active lay participation in worship and parish life
- Increasing digital and social media engagement

Current Priorities & Future Development

Current areas of growth and development include:

- Continuing to grow congregational life at Whitford chapel
 - Expanding digital outreach through social media and online worship recordings
 - Strengthening links between church, school, and community
 - Sustaining traditional liturgical worship while remaining welcoming and accessible to newcomers
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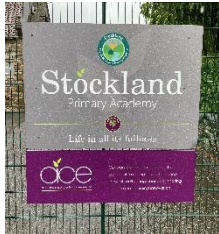
Our Churches: Stockland

Community & Village Life

Rural Stockland has a population of approximately 600–700 people, including long-established Devon residents and those who have moved to the area as retirement approaches. Farming remains the principal occupation alongside a number of small local businesses. The parish includes a mix of older and newer housing together with several surrounding hamlets, and has many young families, contributing to a lively and community-focused village atmosphere rather than a dormitory settlement.

Village life centres around:

- The Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels
- The Kings Arms public house (community owned)
- The tennis club and recreation field activities



Both the primary school (Outstanding) and pre-school are highly regarded, and maintain particularly strong links with the church. Clergy regularly visit the school, including through “Open the Book” worship, and pupils participate in services in church. One member of school staff also serves on the PCC.

*“Thank you for
making are assemblys
so fun” Eddie (7)*

The village hall is an important community hub, hosting a wide variety of activities, school events and celebrations, including wedding receptions, markets, yoga sessions and seasonal gatherings.

The Church Building

Stockland Church dates back to the **12th century**, with the south wall of the chancel and its arches, windows, and blocked doorway surviving from the **Norman Romanesque period**. Most of the church was rebuilt in the **14th and 15th centuries**. The earliest recorded vicar was **Thome de Warham (Thomas de Wareham)**, appointed in **1194**, when **Milton Abbey** was the church's patron.

St Michael and All Angels Church stands at the heart of village life and continues to play an important role within the wider community. The church benefits from:

- Support from the Friends of St Michael committee
- An active programme of fundraising events
- Recently installed heating, including under-pew and overhead systems



The church building is regularly used for worship, community events and seasonal activities throughout the year.

Worship & Services

The church maintains a pattern of regular worship alongside seasonal and community events which are well supported within the parish.

Regular and special events include:

- Easter Brunch with organised village walks
- Harvest Lunch in the village hall
- New Year's Day village walk
- Devon Historic Churches Walk in partnership with Dalwood
- Winter coffee and lunch gatherings

The church seeks to combine traditional parish worship with opportunities for wider community participation and fellowship.

Congregation & Participation

The congregation reflects the mixed nature of the parish community, including long-established residents, retirees and younger families.

The church supports and works alongside a broad range of community activities including:

- A ladies' coffee and lunch club during the winter months
- Community walks and seasonal gatherings
- Local book club and music events hosted by the Kings Arms

The annual May Bank Holiday Fair is a particularly well-known and successful village event. The thriving tennis club also provides children's coaching sessions and enjoys strong community support.

Current Priorities & Future Development

Stockland seeks to maintain its strong community spirit while supporting the future sustainability of church and village life.



Our Churches: Yarcombe

Community & Village Life

Yarcombe is a lively and welcoming rural community with a strong tradition of local events and village activities.

Community life includes:

- Active local clubs, including Young Farmers
- Annual Terrier Race evening each August, attracting visitors from surrounding villages
- A well-used Village Hall hosting:
 - Monthly community lunches
 - Meetings and quizzes
 - The annual Flower Show
- A monthly village market supporting local produce, conversation, and community connection

The village maintains a warm and supportive atmosphere. New residents are welcomed by the village pastoral team with an information pack, and a Christmas card is delivered annually to every household outlining seasonal events and activities.

The parish includes a mix of long-standing residents and newer families. Many people now work from home, while others are involved in a range of local industries. Children generally travel to nearby schools.

Communication within the community is supported through:

- A bi-monthly parish magazine (Yarcombe Voices)
- A weekly community email sharing local news, practical updates, and village information

The Church Building

St John the Baptist is a well-loved 13th-century church with a Royal Warrant dating back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

The church is:

- Historically significant
- Well maintained and cared for
- An important focal point for village life and special occasions



Although regular attendance is relatively modest in comparison to the size of the building, major services and community occasions, for example, funerals, are very well supported.

Worship & Services

The church offers regular worship alongside a number of well-attended special services throughout the year.

Key services and events include:

- Harvest celebrations
- Christmas Eve Carol Service
- Remembrance services with Brass Band accompaniment
- Funerals and significant pastoral occasions

The parish enjoys strong ecumenical links with the local Baptist Chapel, including:

- A shared weekly “Pause for Prayer”
- Joint services and collaborative worship opportunities

The church values community presence, hospitality, and partnership within the wider village.

Congregation & Participation

- Supportive and community-minded congregation
 - Strong volunteer and pastoral culture
 - Good engagement with village events and seasonal worship
 - Positive relationships across local churches and organisations
 - Ongoing integration of new residents and families into village life
-

Current Priorities & Future Development

Current strengths and opportunities include:

- Building on strong community relationships
- Encouraging greater regular worship attendance
- Continuing ecumenical partnership with the Baptist Chapel
- Sustaining the church’s role as a centre for village identity and community gathering

The parish is currently financially stable and well supported.



Our Churches: Forest Church

Our outreach worker, Juletta Obudo, has worked hard to develop links with the schools in the benefice and there is great scope for more to ensure the children have knowledge and experience of faith.



One success is Forest Church: it was started as an outreach to families with loose or no connections to church but is open to anyone.

It meets monthly on a Sunday afternoon in a private woodland, owned by parishioners. Attendance varies from one family to 4 or 5 families. Currently, there is a team of five who lead the sessions.

Although the format varies each month, we generally begin by making popcorn over the firepit with some kind of

welcome activity for children (e.g. Jenga, collecting items for later, preparing something for later).



Then we say our Forest Church opening prayer, take a walk in the woods or field with some kind of focus (e.g. collection items, listening, spotting items, travelling) and possibly do some kind of activity (e.g. making a bird feeder, using natural items to make something, build a shelter).



We have a Bible story, possibly sing a song, have a short time of prayer; reflection before finishing with our closing prayer. We then have a time of fellowship as we toast marshmallows and at Christmas, make s'mores.



Our Ministry Team

Leadership Team:

Gay Atkinson	Churchwarden (Dalwood)
Fanny Balcombe	Churchwarden (Shute & Whitford)
Paul Bright	Churchwarden (Kilminster)
Rozanne Bulmer	Churchwarden (Stockland)
Anna Crabbe	LLM (All)
Bryan Drew	Churchwarden (Stockland)
Brian Eddy	Churchwarden (Dalwood)
Gill Heighway	LLM (All)
Billi Leach	Lay Minister In Training
John Lees	Minister (All)
Juletta Obudo (staff)	Rural Families Outreach (All)
Bijan Omrani	Churchwarden (Shute & Whitford)
Lesley Rew	Churchwarden (Kilminster)
Jean Rich	Churchwarden (Yarcombe)
Chris Shepherd	LLM (All)
Ian Walker	Treasurer (All)
Debra Winterson (staff)	Administration (All)
Peter Wright	Churchwarden (Yarcombe)

Safeguarding Representatives:

Gill Heighway	Kilminster & Overall
Nick Harrison	Dalwood
Meg Humphries	Shute
Cara Gilmour-White	Stockland
Jody Harding	Yarcombe



What we offer

The Vicarage

The vicarage is situated at Kilminster, near Axminster, postcode EX13 7RF.

It is conveniently located next to Kilminster's church on one side and Kilminster Village Hall and the Kilminster Baptist Church on the other side.

There is a good country shop selling fresh produce within walking distance and Kilminster Primary School is a short walk away.

Kilminster Vicarage is a modern two-storey, light and airy, four-bedroom house set in good-sized gardens and fantastic views across the Axe Valley. The property is served by mains water and drainage and is heated by oil.



The ground floor comprises study, cloakroom, sitting room with multi-fuel burner and sliding patio doors leading to the garden, dining room, kitchen and utility. The kitchen and utility were refitted in 2014 and there is pedestrian access from the utility to the integral garage. There is plenty of parking.

The first floor comprises a double bedroom with en-suite, two further double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a family bathroom.

The Deanery

The Honiton Deanery in East Devon has an active clergy Chapter and the Deanery Synod meets three times a year and is well supported.

There are 34 parishes in the Deanery served by eight stipendiary clergy who are supported by licenced lay ministers and retired clergy.



A Taste of 5 Alive

'We have been at St Giles for less than a year and have been made most welcome here, and indeed across the 5 Alive. Change isn't easy; however we believe the Lord will provide, we are looking forward to seeing what He does next and joining in!

Paul & Catherine (Bright)





Bishop Mike Harrison's Blessing for 2026

Wherever you go, God is sending you,
Wherever you are, God has put you there.
Christ who indwells you,
Has something he wants to do with you where you are.
Believe this and go in his love, his grace and power
Amen



APPENDIX 1: Local Facilities/Activities

Facility	Dalwood	Kilminster	Shute & Whitford	Stockland	Yarcombe
Church	St Peter's	St Giles	St Michaels & Mary at the Cross	St Michael & All Angels	St John the Baptist
Electoral Roll	27	64	15	52	41
Sunday Service	11am	9.30am	11am	10.30am	11am
Mid-week Service	9.30am Wed HC	9.30am Tue HC	No	No	no
Other Religions	Methodist Chapel	Baptist Church	-	-	Baptist Chapel
Village Population	460	900	650	600	600
Village Hall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Nursery	Yes	Pre-school		Pre-school	
Village Shop	Yes	Yes	No	No	Monthly Market
Post Office	One x week	One x week	No	No	Once x week
Pub	Yes	Yes x 2	Village Hall	Yes	Yes
Activities	Dalwood	Kilminster	Shute & Whitford	Stockland	Yarcombe
<i>Community:</i>					
Memorial Service	Yes	Yes - held in Kilminster	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wedding Prep	Yes	Yes – held in Kilminster	Yes	Yes	Yes
Forest Church	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Individual:</i>					
Community Lunch	One x month	-	-	-	One x month
House Group Bible Study	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes
Festivals	Flower Christmas	Flower	Flower	Flower	Flower
Harvest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open the Book	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Village Fair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



APPENDIX 2 – Sample Service Sheet

June 2026	Dalwood	Kilmington	Shute & Whitford	Stockland	Yarcombe
Wed 3 June	9.30am Said Communion				
Sat 6 June	Wedding				
Sun 7 June	11am Lay Led worship or village church	11am Morning Worship	11am Shute BCP Holy Communion	10.30am Morning Worship	11am Lay Led worship or village church
Tues 9 June		9.30am Said Communion			
Sat 13 June		3 – 5pm Celebrate Service			
Sun 14 June	3pm Mission Community Tour of Cathedral and Evensong at Exeter Cathedral with Canon Cate Edmonds				
Sun 14 June	Forest Church 4 – 5 pm NB new date and time				
Sat 20 June					Wedding
Sun 21 June	1030 am Joint service at Kilmington Holy Communion		11am Worship in Whitford	10.30am Lay led worship	6.30pm Evening prayer
Sun 28 June	11am Morning Worship	9.30am Morning Prayer (BCP)	6.30pm Choral Evensong	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion



APPENDIX 3: Life Events

Event:	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 to date
Weddings	9	12	5	7	7
Baptisms	8	7	8	12	5
Funerals	29	31	30	24	10
Burials	6	6	9	13	7

