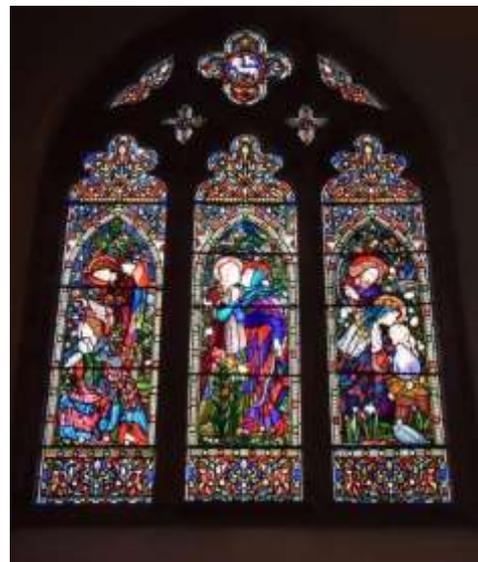
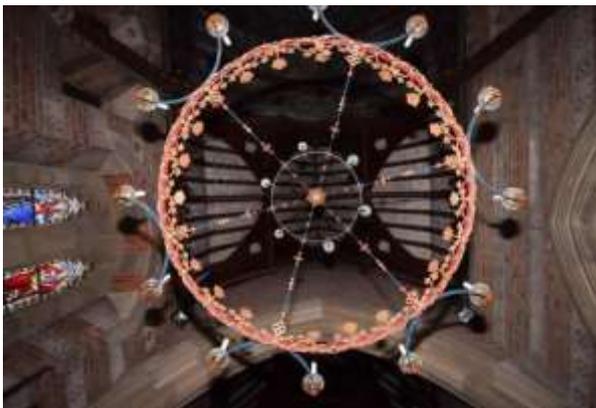


Topcliffe, Baldersby with Dishforth, Dalton and Skipton on Swale

House for Duty Priest in Charge



Introduction by the Bishop of Whitby

We hope to appoint a House for Duty priest for this group of rural parishes, which need a priest with an understanding pastoral heart.

The benefice of **Topcliffe, Baldersby with Dishforth, Dalton and Skipton on Swale** is situated between Thirsk and Ripon. It is on the western boundary of this part of the Diocese of York, and adjoins the Diocese of Leeds.

Each of the four parishes has its own character and needs. The priest we appoint will need to have sensitivity to their individual distinctiveness. Balancing existing expectations vis-à-vis encouraging a forward-looking strategy for sustainable effective church life and mission will take skill and a willingness to listen and observe.

Topcliffe is at present the most populous parish (1,792 in the 2011 census) and is served by St Columba's church (II*). As is the case in the rest of the group, the regularly-worshipping congregation, which has a preference for a conservative liturgical style, represents a small proportion of village residents. There is an adult choir that assembles from a wider area to sing choral services. There is a Church of England Primary Academy near to the church, part of Elevate Multi-Academy Trust, with a roll of over 130. The life and mission of the church in the parish would benefit from a clearer strategy and greater integration, certainly if the resident congregation is not to decline over time without new people being attracted to worship. Within the line of the parish is Alanbrooke Barracks, currently home to 4th Regiment Royal Artillery.

The parish of **Baldersby with Dishforth** was brought into being some 20 years ago, with the closure of the church building in Dishforth and the union of its parish with Baldersby. Its population (1,633) is largely centred on the three villages of Dishforth, Baldersby and Rainton. In the mid-19th century, the landowner, Lord Downe, engaged the architect William Butterfield to build a suite of church, Church of England school and (now former) vicarage, at some distance from Baldersby village. They are wonderful examples of the Gothic revival, and St James' Church is listed Grade I. Lord Downe's scheme was however not followed by the building of a community in the vicinity of the church, which has left them somewhat isolated. The loyal congregation has risen to the challenge of keeping the church building in good order, but understandably that is a huge call on their resources and energy. Early in September proposals were made public by Hope Sentamu Learning Trust to close the school at Baldersby – now an academy – which has a roll of some two dozen pupils. Whilst the Diocesan Board of Education does not oppose the closure, we are aware of the dismay felt in the parish which has significant pastoral implications. Meanwhile, within the parish are Dishforth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School (80+ on roll), a Mission Room in Rainton, and Queen Mary's School, an independent school for girls up to GCSE, which is part of the Woodard Corporation and has its own chaplain.

Skipton on Swale is a small community (163) with a Grade II church, St John's. For many years now, the church has been supported by a very small number of people. As of September, the PCC has taken the decision to begin the process to close the church building, and for the parish to be united with that of Baldersby with Dishforth. The initial public consultation indicates that the decision will not be controversial, and the ongoing process will have the support of the Archdeacon and the diocesan pastoral and buildings teams. There is a pastoral task in supporting the people who have cared for St John's, and in ensuring that the resident parishioners do not simply feel that the church has withdrawn from their community.

Dalton parish (551) has a mix of agriculture and other light industry, based on the disused airfield. The church building, St John's, is a Butterfield miniature, which with its notable glass by William Morris is listed II*. Again the upkeep of the church building is a significant call on resources. The mission of the church is not confined to the building, as there is a Mums and Tots group meeting in the village hall.

The **Vicarage** is a modern four-bedroom purpose-built parsonage in Topcliffe. There is an ample lawned garden to the rear.



Mowbray Deanery – the two main population centres of which are Thirsk and Northallerton – is currently undertaking review and planning, looking towards a pattern of deployment, church life and ministry (lay and ordained) that will be sustainable in the long term. It is likely to take the form of a greater degree of ministerial sharing between what are at present separate benefices, and a grouping, north and south, around the two market towns. The Deanery is practically coterminous with the Methodist Circuit, and there is a particularly strong ecumenical relationship.

Appointment of a Priest in Charge. Because of the possibility of pastoral reorganisation over the deanery at large, the presentation to this benefice has been Suspended and we intend to appoint a Priest in Charge. Bearing in mind the small total population and the current economic situation in the diocese and deanery, it is being offered on a House for Duty basis.

The following pages are the descriptions that the respective PCCs have written about their own situation.

Because the provision of housing constitutes remuneration in kind, this appointment is made under Common Tenure. It is subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure and episcopal reference, and eligibility to work in the UK.

Candidates over the age of 70 will be considered, subject to the Church of England's legislation and guidelines, and the Diocese's policy of giving extensions for renewable periods of two years.

For an informal conversation, contact

- The Area Dean, the Revd Fiona Mayer-Jones vicar@cofe-northallerton.org.uk
- The Archdeacon of Cleveland, the Ven Dr Amanda Bloor
adcl@yorkdiocese.org / 01642 706095
- The Bishop of Whitby, the Rt Revd Paul Ferguson
bishopofwhitby@yorkdiocese.org / 01642 593273

Application form available from the bishop's PA, Mrs Mandy Robinson
mandy.robinson@yorkdiocese.org / 01642 593273

Saint Columba's, Topcliffe



About the parish

Topcliffe is a village in the Hambleton district of North Yorkshire lying on the river Swale midway between Thirsk ('Darrowby' in the popular James Herriot books) and Ripon. The parish includes the village of Asenby on the opposite bank of the river, which lies in Harrogate district. Today the two villages are mostly populated by commuters and retired people with a combined population (per the 2011 census) of just under 1800.

Topcliffe has a long and interesting history. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book and there are indications of a settlement in the area dating back to Neolithic times. William the Conqueror gave the Manor of Topcliffe to William de Percy and the first Percy castle was at the confluence of the Swale and the Cod Beck. The chapel at the east end of the north aisle still bears the family name.

Because of its position, Topcliffe grew into an important market town, host to Lords and Kings and their armies, as well as staging one of the largest annual fairs in the north of England that continued into the 1960's. However, Topcliffe's importance has gradually declined and it is now a relatively quiet place.

In the village you will find a recreational park, two pubs, a general store/post office, a delicatessen/coffee shop, and an art shop/gallery. There is an Academy primary school and a playgroup. The majority of older children attend Thirsk School (Comprehensive). There are two independent schools nearby; Queen Mary's School (independent girls) and Cundall Manor (independent mixed) are not far away.

The Village Hall is a relatively modern, recently refurbished building which is well used and well equipped, featuring a library, a committee room, large kitchen, separate toilets as well as a permanent wheelchair access ramp. It gets used for all the usual purposes and the church hires it for larger functions.

To the north of the village lies Topcliffe Airfield and Allanbrooke Barracks, which is now home to 4th Regiment of the Royal Artillery. Today some of the housing is occupied by civilians and there is a further primary school and a chapel (under the care of a military chaplain) on the site.

The Church Building and Situation

St Columba's church, Topcliffe, occupies an ancient and important Christian site of Celtic origin. Walter Bower's 15th century Scotichronicon records that King Oswald '*...venerated his protector St Columba with the greatest devotion and notably built various churches and oratories in his kingdom, namely in Lindisfarne, Topcliffe-on-Swale and other places*'. (635-642), so we look forward to celebrating the 1400th anniversary of the building of the first wooden church, perhaps by St Aidan, in the not too distant future.

It is believed that the first stone church here was erected by the Percys soon after 1066 and, pre-dating this, a Saxon cross head still remains in the church. The Domesday Book mentions that the church had two priests. The church was rebuilt around 1360 in the decorated style, but by the 19th century this structure was in a perilous state and was eventually almost completely rebuilt in 1855 at a total cost of £3,160 to the design George Andrews, the architect to "Railway King" George Hudson, who lived at Baldersby Park from 1845 to 1853. Little of the old fabric remains apart from the east window and the south wall of the chancel.

Monuments

There are now remarkably few memorials in the church indicating that many were discarded during the 1855 rebuild. In the nave there is a remarkable Flemish brass, bearing full length effigies of Thomas de Topcliffe (*d* 1365), and his wife Mabel (*d* 1391), which is one of the best examples of this type of monumental brass in the country.

Stained glass

In the top of the East window of the Percy Chapel there are a few fragments of medieval glass including the arms of Percy impaling Lucy. The remaining stained glass is Victorian and includes an important panel by Burne-Jones of The Annunciation.

Bells

There are four bells dated 1620, 1622, 1664 and 1725 and variously inscribed. The bells are not in suitable condition to be rung full circle, but there is an Ellacombe mechanism which is operational. This is a source of disappointment as the tower has ample room and the structural solidity to support a peal of six or eight bells – and there is a decent ringing chamber.

Overall

The current building, like so many rural Anglican churches, is disproportionately large for the needs of the regular congregation. However, it does get used for school services by both the primary school and nearby Cundall Manor school and, less frequently, by

our military neighbours. We have seen the church filled to capacity on these occasions. It also has reasonably good acoustics and lends itself to choral singing and concerts.

However, shortcuts taken during the Victorian rebuild have left a legacy of maintenance issues and, by 1988, the building had deteriorated to such an extent that the then architects estimated repairs costing over £300,000 were required. It was tempting to think about closing the building, but, for better or for worse, we decided to attempt repairs in piecemeal fashion, as and when money – and other opportunities – presented themselves. This was partly driven by a dogged determination not to be beaten, and also in recognition of the fact that the Victorian church stands on an ancient site of particular significance in the north of England and must be kept open for worship.

In practice the last 30+ years have seen quite a lot of activity. The high-level stonework on the tower has been entirely repaired or renewed (a colossal project). The valley gutter and some of the low-level stonework has been replaced. The church has been completely re-wired and a sound system with hearing loop installed. The organ has been replaced and the east and south walls of the chancel replastered and redecorated. The former clergy vestry on the north side has been refurbished with modern kitchen units, and a new gas boiler, heating the whole church, installed. With help from the Community Payback Scheme, a great deal of work to tidy up the churchyard and terraces has been undertaken and this continues; leaning gravestones have been lifted and re-set; trees have been trimmed and rampant undergrowth cleared, and by and large this has been a very positive experience for all involved.

The church is a Grade II* listed building and considerable assistance has been provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust (whose annual sponsored Ride + Stride we try to support) in funding recent restoration work.

Church Hall

The church hall is a former free grammar school, set up and endowed in 1549. The building is quite attractive and dates from the 19th century, but in poor condition, and over the years has been unsympathetically repaired. The small annex to the hall contains a modern toilet/washroom configured for disabled use.

Churchyards

The churchyard is full but, we believe, has never formally been “closed” for burials. The church also has a churchyard at Winn Lane (commonly referred to as “Winn Lane Cemetery”) which is now approaching capacity. Churchyard plans are up to date.

Congregation and Worship

Our congregation is largely comprised of older people, although some of us once fell into the category of the “younger generation” at St Columba’s! Our own experience, coupled with experience from elsewhere (when services have been cut as the result of reduction on clergy numbers), told us that maintaining regular weekly worship is a major factor in maintaining the life of the church. As a result this is something we have endeavoured to achieve since the 1990’s with weekly services throughout the month, using lay leaders when necessary. This has held us in good stead through a number of interregna this century, coupled latterly with the COVID crisis. The latter has reduced our current attendance to around 10 at most services drawn from an electoral role of

30. Special services such as the Christmas Carol Service, Easter Vigil and ensuing Choral Mass of Easter, Patronal Festival/Heritage Weekend and choral services for All Saints or All Souls can be very well attended. We expect to serve refreshments after every service in the Percy Chapel.

Monthly services at the moment comprise

1st Sunday 6.30pm Choral Evensong BCP (lay led)

2nd Sunday 10.45am Holy Communion CW traditional language

3rd Sunday 10.45am Sung Matins BCP (lay led)

4th Sunday 10.45am Holy Communion CW modern language

For now there is no 5th Sunday service, which used to be the Benefice Holy Communion.

Services arranged for festivals aim to suit a wider variety of tastes. For example Christmas would be marked with a series of services, including a Crib Service with children's carols on Christmas Eve, a traditional Midnight Mass, a Family Service on Christmas day with our Methodist friends, and a formal service of Nine Lessons and Carols on the Sunday preceding.

We have endeavoured to maintain our monthly service program since late September 2020 despite COVID restrictions and the interregnum, but communion services were not possible between Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021. In addition a lay led Compline was held every Wednesday in Lent.

There is a Bible Study and prayer group that meets during Lent and occasionally at other times of the year.

We have recently started to make more of our Patronal Festival, combining this with a Heritage Weekend which explores each year a different aspect of our church and village history. This now spills over into two or three days, always with guided tours of the church, tower and graveyard, and sometimes into other parts of the village and immediate surroundings. Also themed displays and family histories, and we have plans to include lectures, strolling musicians and re-enactment groups when this important part of our engagement with the wider village can once again return in 2022.

Weddings and funerals now continue as appropriate.

Fundraising

As a social activity this can be particularly effective, with regular events including the ever popular annual Attic Auction, involving large numbers of people from the wider village as helpers, donors and buyers, and seasonal church fairs. One off events in the past have included wine tasting, barn dancing, choral and instrumental concerts, a Sotheby's 'Antique Evening' and a 'Fawlty Towers' evening in Harrogate (in aid of the tower restoration of course), and some of these could well be revisited.

Support for charities is not as well organised as it has been in the past and should also be revisited. Until COVID there was a collection point for food bank donations in the church and Lent Lunches in the Village Hall raised funds for Christian Aid. Carol Singing around the two villages raises money for local Macmillan Nurses.

Music

There is a choir of around 15 people from the wider locality who provide music for the monthly Choral Evensong and other larger services throughout the year. The full choir is genuinely ecumenical and so only smaller numbers are available for the morning communion services and Matins. The choir has occasionally sung services elsewhere including Scotland and the Limousin in France. We have a regular organist and Director of Music and can call upon a further organist when accompanied choral services demand it.

Other matters

There are seven members of the PCC all of whom have individual roles which can keep them very busy. We aim to meet about four or five times a year, but at present there is much to contend with, requiring many more meetings.

Most of the miscellaneous preparation for services is taken care of, including setting out the altar for communion, providing readers for the lessons, and selecting music and preparing the hymn board. Public notices for services are changed weekly and cleaning and flowers are kept up to date.

The churchyard was principally maintained until COVID by a locally organised Community Payback Team, with additional help from a few parish volunteers. For now the latter do remarkably well on their own.

We aim to have the church open daily throughout the week, but current restrictions mean that is not possible at the moment.

What we look for in our new priest

We would welcome a first-rate preacher who can bring theological insight to an adult congregation, and capable of biblical instruction for all age groups. The use of plain language without resorting to platitude or ecclesiastical jargon is a must.

Their faith must be authentic and lived, ministering genuinely and effectively to the congregation they have, as well as to the congregation they might like to have. Life experience, a solid theological education and their own thinking will mark out someone who is on top of their subject matter and whose insights are a genuine revelation to their audience. This will be someone who loves life in its messy detail, but is not afraid to face the challenges of a fractious world and will stand up to its moral relativism and not be afraid to call out wrongdoing. We expect a robust resistance to populist pressures.

We are very specifically looking for a priest who has a genuine respect for history, tradition, formal ceremony and the arts: someone for whom glorious services are a pinnacle of worship in which we may gain a glimpse of the beauty and majesty of God. Such a priest may well have a background in High-Church and Anglo-Catholic practice. A true love, respect and enthusiasm for traditional, classical church music is essential, seeing this as an asset to invest in, rather than an encumbrance to be worked around.

In particular we would welcome someone who is truly committed to liturgy and scripture as written in the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible; not without flexibility, but who can carefully adapt and incorporate change while always recognising the importance of the wonderful heritage these sources represent. The

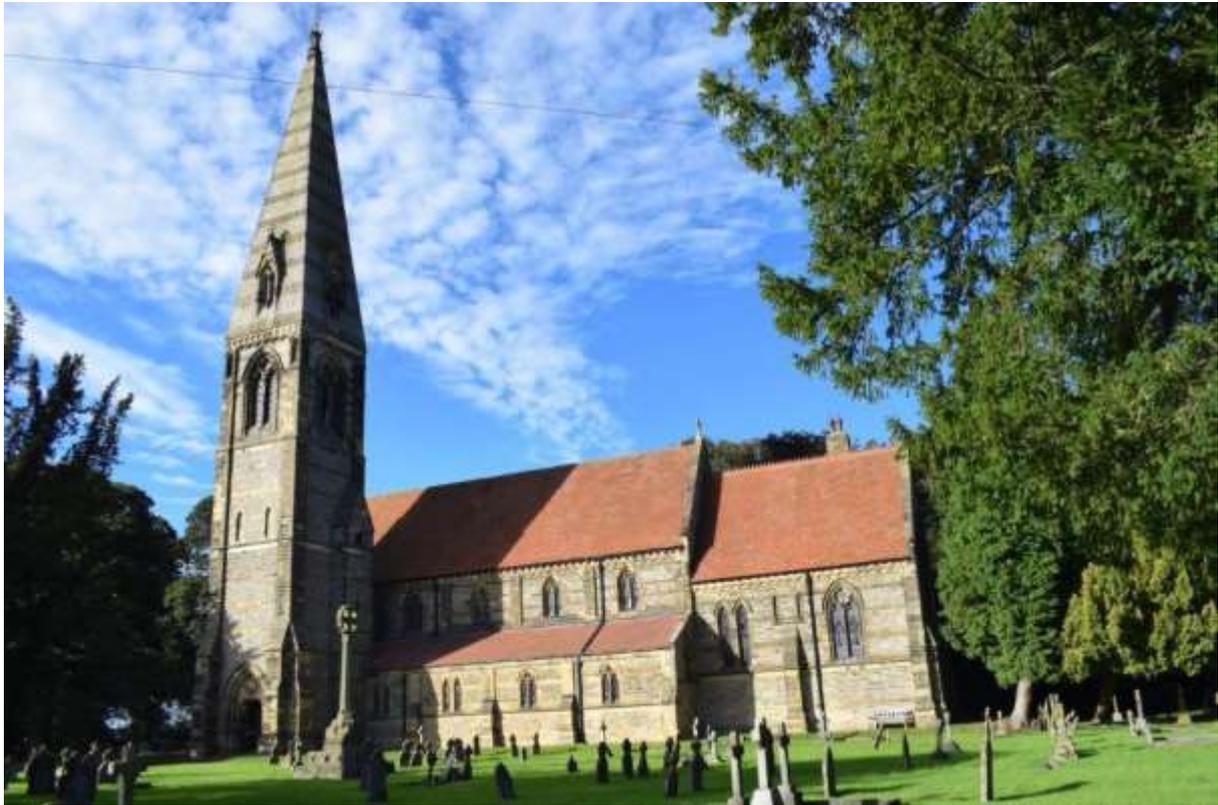
ability to take convincing services using contemporary liturgy will also be needed from time to time and in different settings.

Outwardly St Columba's likes to keep its formality to organised worship. In the community, we need a priest who can engage quietly, and with great empathy and approachability, with all, particularly the elderly and those on the fringes of society. An informal social style outside church is essential.

Above all we are looking for a wise, kind person who can work with the PCC in developing the vision of what can be done and with the patience to carry it through.

St. James The Greater

Baldersby St James Church with Rainton and Dishforth



St James' was built between 1856 and 1858, and was designed by William Butterfield. It is Gothic Revival in style. The church consists of a west tower, a five-bay aisled nave, a south porch, and a two-bay un-aisled chancel.

The grounds of the church and its churchyard measure 1.38 acres. The wall of the churchyard is grade II listed. The church has a lych gate which is grade I listed. The church itself is Grade 1 listed.



The church stands in the middle of the conservation village of Baldersby St James surrounded by William Butterfield houses, opposite is the village school also designed by Butterfield. The vicarage stands to the back of the church and is now a private residence.

The parish comprises the villages of Baldersby, Rainton and Dishforth. Along with Baldersby, Dishforth also has a church school, both schools have Foundation Governors.

St James` is very much a living Church with an active and committed congregation of regular worshippers. The Church is open every day and there are toilet and kitchen facilities.

Visitors are welcome, be it for quiet reflection, or academic interest and part of our welcome to visitors is the availability of refreshments for anyone to partake of.

Service Times		<p>We look forward to welcoming a vicar who is community orientated and with good pastoral care.</p> <p>Someone who will strengthen links with our local primary schools (without being burdened with full governorship of all schools)</p> <p>We would like him or her to guide and encourage our already willing and enthusiastic church members, also for them to fit into rural life.</p> <p>We do not feel the prospective applicant needs to live in the Benefice.</p>
10.45	1 st Sunday Holy Communion	
9.30	2 nd Sunday Prayer Breakfast	
10.45	3 rd Sunday Holy Communion	
9.30	Morning Prayer	

Parish of Dalton

It is set in a working agricultural village of approximately 400 houses with a population last recorded in the 2011 census as 518 which is one of the largest permanent population of a single village in the benefice, it is surrounded by locally farmed fields.

Dalton appears in the Doms Day book of 1086 as *Deltune* meaning valley settlement. We do not have a school. Dalton is more of a football village with our own team and pitch. It has a very socially active village Hall and as a church we work well alongside each other. The village has two public houses and one post office.

Pre-covid we had two Sunday lunches spring and autumn where we could see as many as 120 people attend. The revenue from these is our main form of fund raising together with smaller events through the year.

St John the Evangelist



The church of St John, a pretty William Butterfield church, built in 1868. The church enjoys a grade 2 starred status. Our windows are by pre-Raphaelite artists Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris.

Qualities and Attributes of a new Parish Priest

We seek:

A prayerful priest from a central tradition of the church, faithful in the ministry of the word and sacrament in its various forms. Who will support through their ministry all people of God regardless of age, Colour gender or sexual orientation.

They would need to be able to communicate in a modern form of ministry to ensure we promote the church for today to try to encourage people who may not yet have discovered God and church beyond its sometimes-main perceived functions.

A strong collaborative leader and team member with vision empathy and a good sense of humour to help develop a small rural church to meet the needs of its population today's modern life and trends. We will be glad of a Priest who will foster existing links and help develop new partnerships within the local community

Keen to help develop a strong spiritual life for all, helping to make church a welcoming environment for all comers especially young people. Willing to actively be involved with the surrounding church schools.

Ecumenically minded, sympathetic to rural affairs and prepared to work to strengthen the special qualities of each village community within the benefice, by being a visible presence.

St John's, Skipton on Swale



The church was built in 1848 and is situated on the A61 between Thirsk and Ripon. It is a very rural area with field and farms. We have no village shop or pub, and the public transport is limited.

The benefice has four churches of which St John's Church, Skipton on Swale, is one. The village is small, about 30 houses in total. We have had a slow decline in numbers attending church, most of which are over 70+. Sadly because the village is so small we can no longer support the cost of the church. Going forward the building needs costly repairs, which for the number of people attending church is no longer viable.

We have started the process to close the church, but would be looking for someone who can help and guide us through this, to get both the best outcome for the church and the congregation.

After being without a vicar for the last 15 months, we are looking forward to a new one being appointed:

1. To give us help and guidance in the closing of the church.
2. On behalf of the other churches in the benefice one who is an excellent communicator with good administrative skills.
3. Keen to build a strong church in numbers and spirituality.

4. Outward going and ready to meet the people in the local community and welcome them into church.
5. Someone who understand the rural way of life and how things work.
6. Within the benefice, we have three Church of England schools. The appointee will be the first contact between school and church for many children. We would ask that he or she acts as a link with these schools.