Firstly, may I express my thanks for considering this position, and for reading this far. I believe that St Philip’s has the potential to be a really fulfilling ministry, with a lovely residence attached, and the opportunity to become immersed in a lively community and a welcoming and charming church.

I write as the Rector of Burwash, Burwash Weald and Etchingham, which is a relatively new united benefice. The rectory is in Burwash, which is the largest village of the three. About 2 miles to the east is Etchingham, with a stunning church building and a small but faithful congregation. Burwash Weald lies the furthest west of the churches in the benefice, and the village sits between Burwash and Etchingham in size.

All three churches are ‘central’ in worship style as most village churches are, with predominantly organ based traditional hymnody, although I lead some of the family services at St Bartholomew’s Burwash with my guitar which has been well received. We aim as a benefice to co-operate where advantageous, but also allow space for each community’s individual identities to flourish, and as such we have a number of benefice services, currently on the 2nd and 5th Sundays of each month, as well as a benefice ‘Messy Church’ style service which is held at St Bartholomew’s as it is central to the benefice. Across the benefice we hold many different styles of worship, from Book of Common Prayer Matins, Evensong and Communion, through to informal liturgies and family services. For the most part the vicar at Burwash Weald would be working in that parish, but I hope they would encourage and support the benefice mission as well.

I believe that what St Philip’s need from their leadership is someone who loves the gospel and is willing to bring that love into their teaching and leadership, and who is keen to bring the message of Christ into the village, nurture those community links and relationships, and to value them as potential areas for evangelism and mission. I would expect anyone who joins the team to be able to affirm an orthodox view of the authority of the bible.

Rev’d Thomas Pelham,

Rector Burwash, Burwash Weald and Etchingham.