



Profile of the United Benefice of St Mary the Virgin, Ticehurst & St Augustine of Canterbury, Flimwell

Our faithful, supportive and enthusiastic congregations seek an energetic incumbent of open evangelical tradition to provide spiritual leadership to address the challenges of growth, age profile and to inspire further progress in achieving our ambitious environmental goals.

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/>



Introduction and Welcome

Part 1 The Area and Community

Part II The Churches

Part III Parish Activity

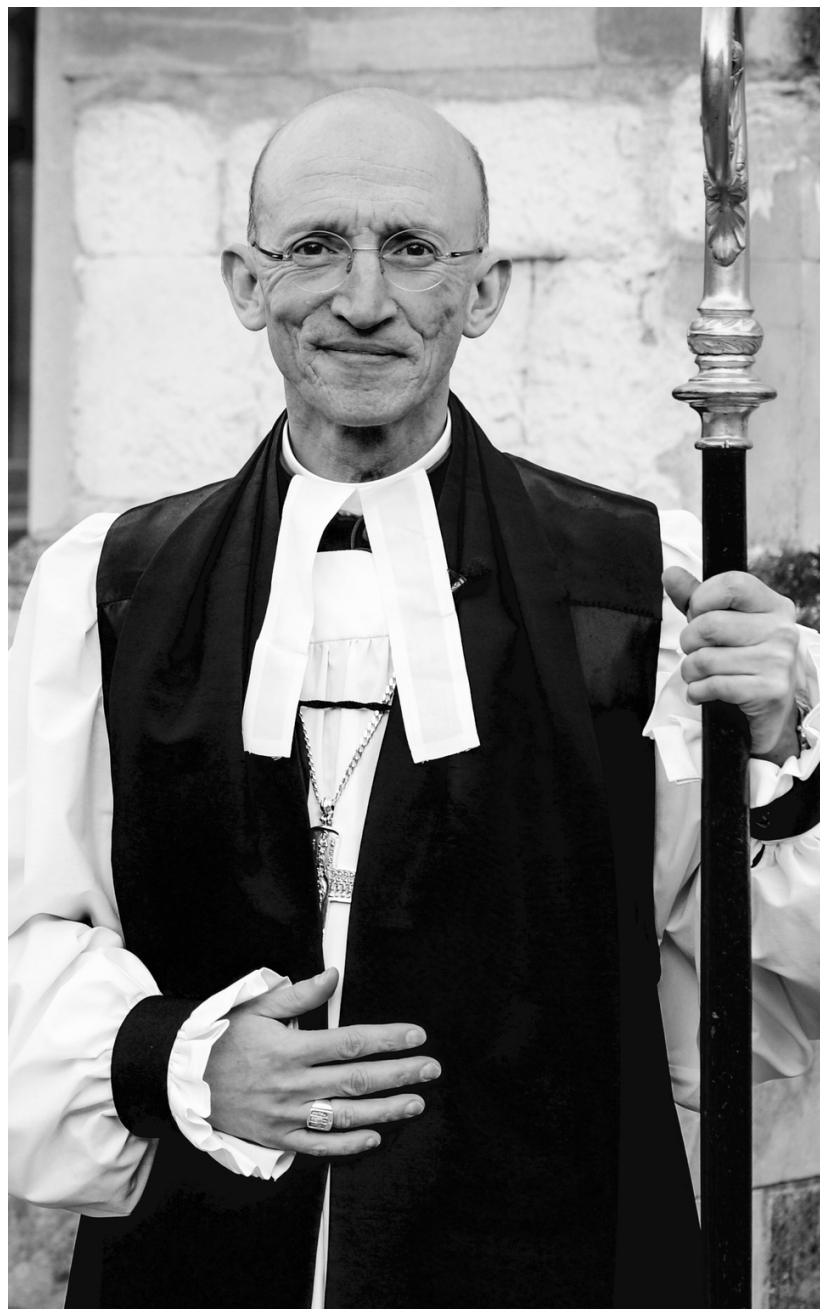
Part IV The Vacancy

Part V The Vicarage

Part VI Logistics and Administration

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/>





Proclaiming the Mystery of Faith

In 2025 this diocese celebrates the 950th anniversary of witness and evangelisation from a mission base in Chichester, building on the earlier mission founded by St Wilfrid at Selsey. 2025 also marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with its reminder of the formative claim upon us of the catholic creeds. These anniversaries are more than historical footnotes. They speak powerfully about the richness of faith and mission that is our inheritance locally and universally. Inspired by that inheritance, we seek to be a household of faith that is endlessly curious about how the Holy Scriptures and the sacraments of the New Covenant enable us to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in today's noisy and distracted world.

If God is calling you to join us in the task of proclaiming the mystery of faith in some part of this diocese, we pray that the contribution of your gifts and experience will enrich our witness and deepen your own discipleship.

We take very seriously the call to diversity and radical inclusion as characteristic of the Church's mission. For this reason we welcome applications from ordained women and Global Majority Heritage clergy, who are under-represented in those who serve this diocese.

+Martin



Rev'd Julie Sear,
Rural Dean

Part I - The Area and Community

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/about/our-parishes/>

The ecclesiastical parishes of Ticehurst and Flimwell have populations of 3000 and 800 respectively. Their beautiful historic churches are situated on the Sussex border with Kent and are within easy reach of both Tunbridge Wells and the coast around Hastings. The whole area is designated of Outstanding Natural Beauty in one of the most wooded counties in England with views across the High Weald.

The parishes are largely rural, but are home to a significant number of workers who commute or work outside the area, which tends to weaken their sense of belonging with the local community. There is a broad demographic mix with property ranging from some fine old country houses to both privately and housing association-owned homes. However, in an area with a higher than national average level of income, there are distinct areas of rural deprivation. Young people who grow up in the community struggle to find housing they can afford when they leave home, which again serves to reduce the numbers of younger people who feel a deep connection to the villages.

While working farms rely on seasonal and hourly paid labour, most village employment is in light industry, small businesses, four car dealerships and a long-established private psychiatric hospital. The workforce features a higher than average proportion of self-employment. While the villages include more young families than many rural areas, there are a large number of retired people, with a sheltered accommodation establishment and care home. There are few people from ethnic minorities and no places of worship for other denominations or faiths.

For shopping and other local employment opportunities the nearest large town is Tunbridge Wells which is accessible by bus from both villages or by train from Stonegate, Etchingam or Wadhurst stations.



Part I - The Area and Community

Ticehurst is a compact village, but also includes outlying clusters of houses. It has a good range of local shops centred on the square, which meet most daily needs. The area medical practice has a local surgery.

Flimwell Village is more spread out and has the crossroads with the A21 at its centre. The village boasts an ecological development which incorporates various businesses including a restaurant, pottery studio, bike hire, photography and forest school, amongst others.

The Hastings/Tunbridge Wells bus service runs through both villages and provides an hourly service. Etchingam, Stonegate and Wadhurst railway stations on the main Charing Cross/Hastings line are easily reached.

The Ticehurst and Flimwell C of E Primary School (VC) has 112 children and caters for both villages. The excellent school building was opened in 2004 and is on the Flimwell side of Ticehurst within walking distance of the main housing areas of the village.

The local secondary school is Uplands Academy at Wadhurst, which has a sports centre open to the public. For sixth form education, colleges in nearby Crowborough or Heathfield are accessible. There are a large number of excellent independent schools in the area but none within the parishes. There are significant regional leisure facilities at Bewl Water and Bedgebury Pinetum

both of which are within walking/cycling distance of the villages. They provide excellent walks, biking, water sports and angling.

Dale Hill Golf Club is midway between the parishes while Flimwell Cricket Club and Ticehurst Football Club are active in local leagues.

The two villages offer a wide range of activities catering for most ages although the shortage of suitable activities for young people is a matter of concern despite recent improvements to facilities.

The Ticehurst Village Institute provides a large recreation ground, play equipment, all weather court, all weather petanque pitch, hall with a stage and with a kitchen and smaller rooms providing facilities for Mother and Toddlers, Gardeners, WI and other local clubs and societies. The hall is currently undergoing a full restoration to further improve facilities.

Ticehurst Youth Group @ the Village Hall caters for 10-17 year olds and uniformed organisations meet in the dedicated Scout Hut

Flimwell has a recreation ground with a pavilion and the new village hall has many community activities, monthly market and an award winning ice cream parlour. Flimwell also has its own fine-food store and award winning smokery, a farm shop and successful brewery. There are four public houses and a four star hotel within the boundaries of the two villages.





The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Ticehurst

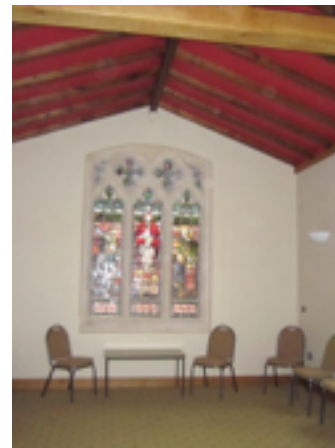
The church is Grade 2* listed and is open during the day. We receive a significant number of visitors and the text for our visitors guide can be visited [here](#).

The original churchyard is now closed for burials and is maintained by Rother District Council, but a further area is in use. There is a Garden of Remembrance for the interment of ashes.

The church has changed and been added to over the centuries, and the latest addition has been St Mary's Room, which was completed and consecrated in 2010. It is a small versatile room, used for services of Holy Communion during the week and refreshments after services. It is also available for the use of the community, and provides a kitchenette and toilet. It allows disabled access to the church and is currently used by various groups.

The pews in the church have kneelers mounted on platforms over the central heating pipes. In 1981 Mrs Jean Williams, wife of the newly arrived vicar suggested and then organised the decoration of the kneelers which have continued since then to be designed stitched and fitted by people of the village. The many and varied themes, including local scenes and subjects, are depicted in the needlepoint

Works. There are no major structural problems and the church is well maintained. Work recommended in the 2021 Quinquennial Survey has mostly been completed with a recent investment of over £40k



Part II – The Churches (continued)

St Augustine's Church, Flimwell

St Augustine's is a Grade 2 Listed building designed by Decimus Burton. Further information about the history of our building can be found [here](#). The church is kept locked during the day with access available on request from the warden and the neighbouring properties.

Works. Over the last few years a regular maintenance programme has been followed and is ongoing to keep the building in good order. One of the fine mosaic panels in the chancel has been affected by dampness and advice for its restoration has been received from established conservators. The church yard is closed for burials, except for the occasional interment of ashes and is maintained by the Parish Council.



Introduction

Ticehurst and Flimwell have shared an incumbent since 1978. The relationship works well with shared activities and services combined particularly around key church festivals. Relations between the two parishes are friendly and collaborative with some services and activities combined during the year.

Special Services

In addition to the major Christian Festivals, **St Mary's** hosts special services which which have included Mothering Sunday, Rogation, Creationtide (e.g. Harvest Festival, Pet Service), Healing, All Souls and Remembrance Services. The Primary School also holds four annual church services in St Mary's.

Innovation and creativity in celebrating all aspects of Christian life is generally encouraged and embraced

St Augustine's also holds a Harvest Service a Taizé service and Remembrance Service. There is a United Benefice Christmas Crib Service, along with a candlelit service with poems and carols in December. We are also exploring different types of services.

Service Assistance

Some members of the congregation are licensed to assist with Communion. It is customary for members of the congregation to lead Intercessions at most services.

Home Communions - Services have been held regularly at local sheltered accommodation/care homes. This has been suspended during the vacancy.

Current patterns of Regular Worship - St Mary's Ticehurst

1st Sunday	8am Communion (1662 BCP said) 11am Morning Worship (contemporary; all-age)
2nd Sunday	8am Communion (1662 BCP said) 11am Communion (Common Worship; Sung Eucharist)
3rd Sunday	8am Communion (1662 BCP said) 11am Morning Prayer (1662 BCP; Sung Matins)
4th Sunday	11am Communion (Common Worship; Contemporary) 6pm Evensong (1662 BCP; Sung)
5th Sunday	8am Communion (1662 BCP said) 11am Communion (Common Worship; Sung Eucharist)
2nd Wednesday 9.30am	Communion (CW Trad. Lang.; said) in St Mary's Room. Please note that this service has been suspended until further notice whilst we are in vacancy.

Current patterns of Regular Worship - St Augustine's, Flimwell

1st Sunday	(No service at St Augustine's)
2nd Sunday	9.30am Morning Worship/Morning Prayer (Contemp. language)
3rd Sunday	(No service at St Augustine's)
4th Sunday	9.30am Communion (Common Worship; Order One in contemporary language)
5th Sunday	(No service at St Augustine's)

Part III – Parish Activities

Children

St Mary's

There is a junior choir who lead singing at the monthly Morning Worship family service. All adults supervising children's activities at St. Mary's are DBS cleared and there is a designated trained Safeguarding Officer in situ. A newly-formed Parent/Carer and Toddler Group is currently running weekly in St Mary's Room.

St Augustine's

There is a children's area at the back of the church available if required. The United Benefice Service at Christmas is a children's Nativity Service. Music pupils from a local school come and perform including playing the organ at services.

We work closely with the our local primary school under the "Open the Book" scheme - for more details visit

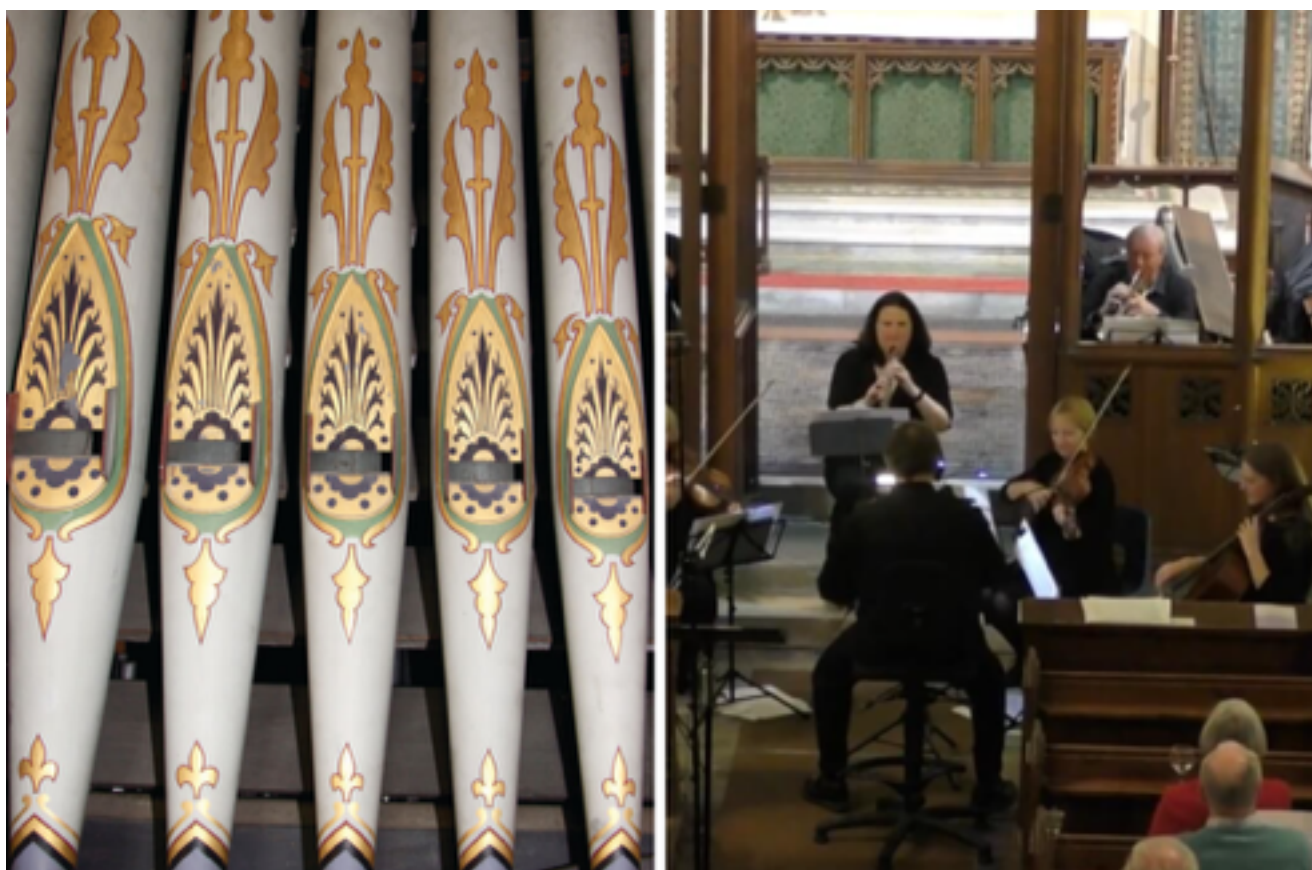
<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/activity/open-the-book/>



Musical and audio/visual contributions

St Mary's has an excellent choir and organist. The organist is supported by other players when needed. The Green Hymns Old and New is used at both churches. We benefit from a newly-installed audio visual system which can be used to support musical contributions when necessary and also to display presentations, images and video as required. We have also hosted other local choirs for concerts and Deanery services.

St Augustine's has held a very successful annual concert of classical music by Christian Ensembles over the last few years. The most recent one in September 2023 included the famous "Auschwitz Violin".



Bell Ringing

Led by Andrew Cook, there is an enthusiastic team at St Mary's who ring every Sunday. They host other ringing teams and visit other towers. Further information about the bells can be found [here](#)

General:

Both parishes have a very enthusiastic congregation who are happily involved with various rotas for church cleaning, refreshments after services, flower arranging, sidespersons, and working parties for tidying up the churchyards - these are examples. Further details of regular activities can be found [here](#)



ECO Church

Over the last few years, St Mary's have worked towards attaining the Eco Church Awards and received our bronze, silver, and gold awards in 2019, 2020 and 2022 respectively. To date we are the only church in the Diocese of Chichester to have achieved the Gold Award.

As part of our efforts, we also run an annual Great Big Green Week when we join with communities across the UK, aiming to build on the steps we're taking to help nature and address climate change.

For further details visit <https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/activity/eco-church/>



Outward Giving

St Mary's shares 5% of its annual income each year between Christian charities at home and overseas. Also there are special collections for the British Legion Poppy Appeal and the Children's Society (e.g. Christingle). Through CMS we also support theological training in an area North East of the DRC (Congo).

St Augustine's supports **two** charities annually, **one** in the UK and **one** abroad. At Harvest time the donated produce is sold, the proceeds supporting a chosen charity.

Fund Raising

An annual Christmas Bazaar raises funds for the Church and we have also organised a concert involving a visiting choir during Holy Week. Coffee mornings are organised on an ad-hoc basis in support of external fund raising for example during Fair Trade Fortnight.



Group Activities and Fellowship

A fellowship group with study and prayer, takes place in St Mary's Room every week. There are men's & ladies' breakfasts at external venues with visiting speakers. Every Friday we hold a "Warm Welcome" morning stimulated by the energy crisis in 2022. This has become a popular and ongoing opportunity for fellowship in the community.

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/activity/st-marys-fellowship/>





General

Both parishes have enthusiastic congregations who are happily involved with various rotas for church cleaning, refreshments after services, flower arranging, sidespersons, and working parts for tidying up the churchyards- these are examples. Further details of our regular activities can be found [here](#)

Parish Magazine

Neither parish currently produces a magazine but there are church pages in the monthly 'News & Views' magazine which covers Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate. Our previous incumbent wrote a weekly email together with service and notice sheets for Sunday morning worship, also a monthly newsletter. This is being sustained by the Church Warden during the vacancy.

The Church and Visitors

St Mary's is open every day for visitors. A large selection of information is available, including guides in four languages. There is a comprehensive list of memorials and identified graves together with other relevant information in the visitor corner of the Church. For details of the history of the Church please see

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/history/st-marys/> and <https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/history/visitor-information/>



St Augustine's receives visitors throughout the year including relatives of deceased parishioners and visits from the Victorian Society. Information and welcome leaflets are available at the church. Access is available during the week on request. Jaye, our Church Warden, and Nik, our building officer, enthusiastically help visitors researching ancestry, graves and war memorials.

<https://ticehurstandflimwell.church/history/st-augustines/>

Vision

St Mary's & St Augustine's seek to grow and make a useful contribution to all in the community, through its traditions and practices embedded in the open evangelical tradition. For further details of our vision

[click here](#)

First Aim - to attract

"Jesus said, 'Come to me all you who are weary and burdened'" (Matt 11:28)

We aim to stress the importance of welcoming people, especially those who have troubles, to come into the life of the worshipping community e.g Open the Book

Second Aim - to engage

Jesus said, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel...'" (Mk 16:15)

We aim to go out into the community and be involved with people where they are, using this interaction to draw them to us

Third Aim - to evolve

"Jesus sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God ..." (Luke 9:2)

Adapting our approach to reflect the community. Eg "Open the Book" in School Assembly work or house-based church

Develop numbers and, especially, the range of worshippers in church: eg grow interest in church attendance among families with children, among teenage or student ages and young adults.

Develop among our parishioners struggling with life's challenges an interest in what Jesus offers, in the Christian faith and mission.

Key Goals and Objectives for development

Organise groups of people with relevant skills or interests into active “outreach” teams. Examples like 'Warm Welcome Fridays', occasional talks and concerts exist, but more need to be developed.

Encourage those who can, and wish, to become more widely known as a member of the congregation who will meet anyone on neutral territory (perhaps the pub) to discuss mutually beneficial, enhanced relationships.

Continue to develop relations with the Ticehurst and Flimwell C of E Primary School. “Open the Book” does good work, but more inter-action is possible and desirable.



The vicar we need – her or his likely attributes, skills and experience

1. Can demonstrate confidence within the open evangelical tradition and worship
2. Can evidence their experience as a collaborative leader, able to develop and manage effective teams
3. Can show how they have been able to maintain a holistic view and shrewdly judge priorities
4. Will demonstrate a commitment to developing pastoral care and outreach across a breadth of community relationships
5. Will see their role as a calling to others, whilst representing an opportunity to deepen their personal vision

We present the list above as a general guide. Candidates who cannot demonstrate previous experience in all of these areas are encouraged to apply where they are called to do so. Equally candidates with experience and attributes that would clearly fit with our Vision and Aims will be welcome to contact us.

The Situation

The present state of church life in Ticehurst and Flimwell will give many opportunities to an energetic incumbent. The size of the congregations in the villages has improved in recent years. There is a deep reservoir of goodwill and many active church members provide support for the incumbent.

The Vicar is an ex-officio member of the governing body of Ticehurst & Flimwell CE Primary School. There are two Foundation Governors. Along with members of both congregations, the incumbent regularly takes assembly at the school using the Bible Society 'Open the Book' programme and there are four school services each year in St Mary's.

Part V – The Vicarage



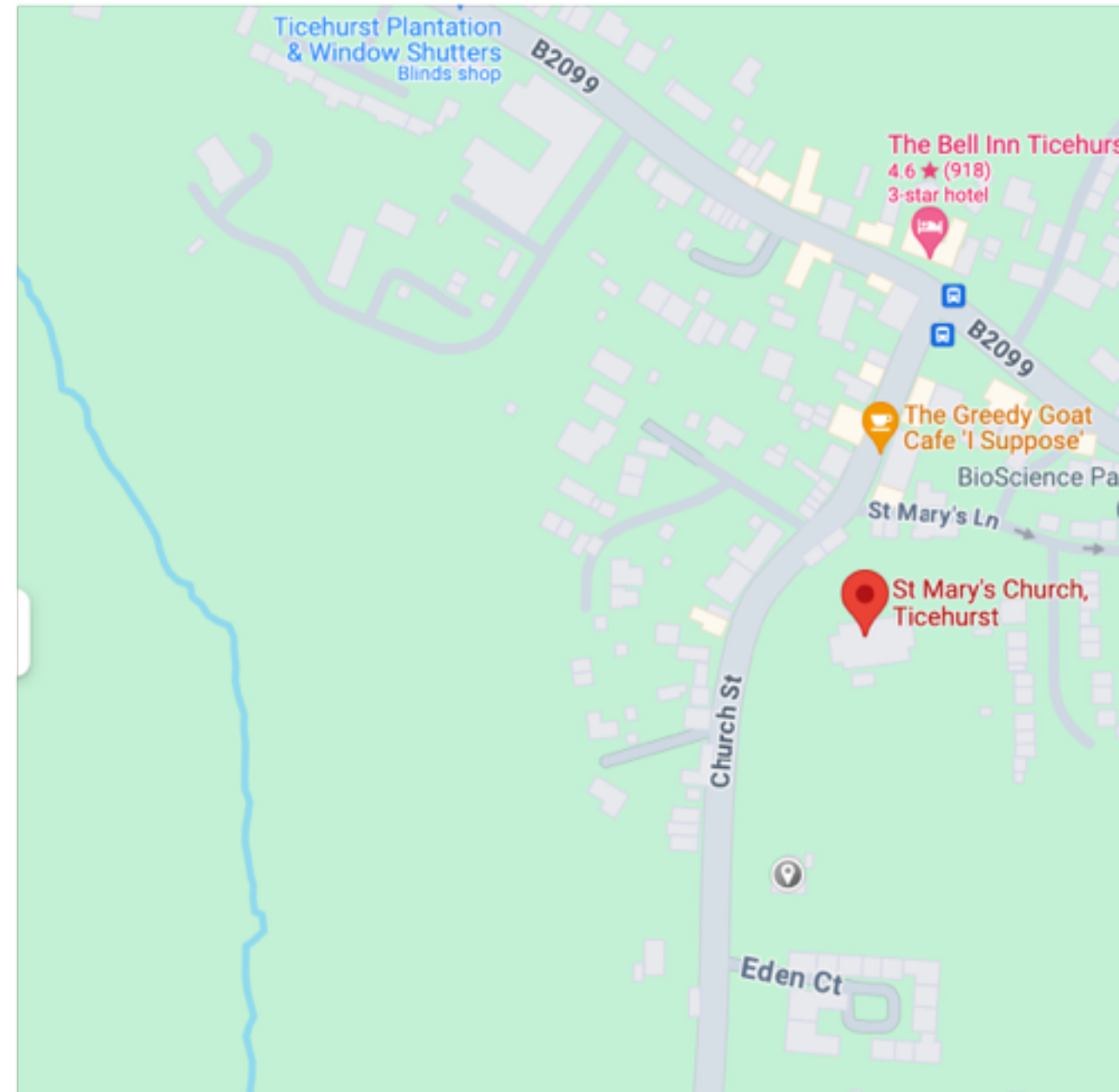
Part V – The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a relatively modern four bedroom detached property adjacent to the church and within walking distance of the village centre.

There is a study and downstairs cloakroom which is self-contained.

It provides generous family accommodation and is set in pleasant gardens mostly laid to grass with a small kitchen garden. The garden is being maintained while the property is vacant.

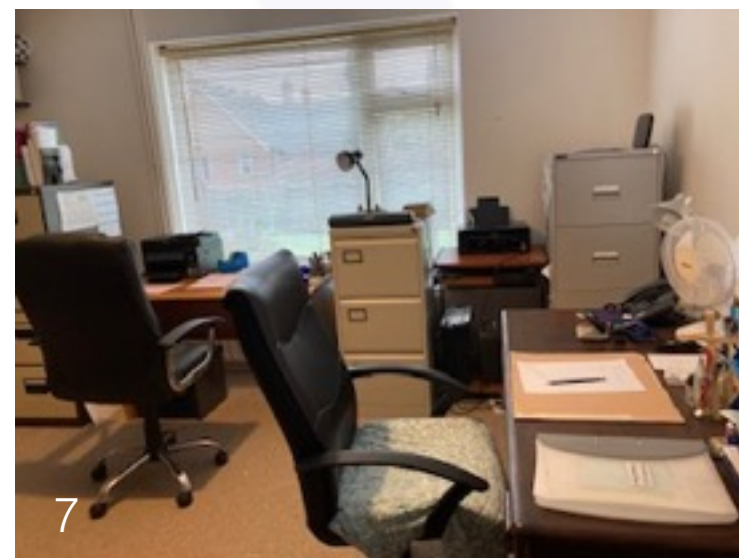
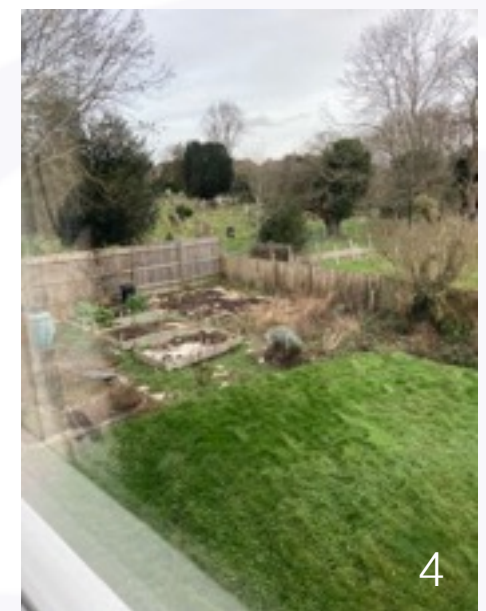
There is an integral garage and additional parking for 3-4 vehicles.



[To explore using Google Maps and Street View click here](#)

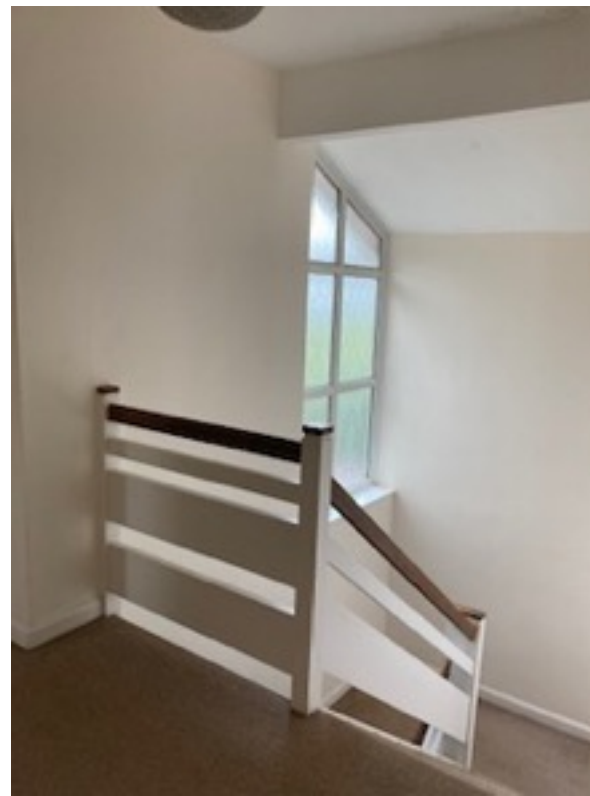
Part V – The Vicarage

The Vicarage - in photographs



- The Vicarage**
Church Street Ticehurst East
Sussex TN5 7AB
1. Front Elevation and parking
 2. Rear Elevation
 3. Garden
 4. Garden
 5. St Mary's from the Vicarage
 6. Sitting/Dining Room
 7. Study/Office

Part V – The Vicarage



The Vicarage
Church Street Ticehurst East Sussex TN5 7AB



Electoral Roll (2022)

St Mary's – 121

St Augustine's – 30 A small proportion of those enrolled live outside the parish boundaries.

Attendance

The average attendance at regular services at:		Adult	Child
St Mary's	Holy Communion (8am)	20	
	11am Morning Services	45	3
	11am Family Service	44	11
	Evensong	16	
	Wednesday Communion	4	

St Augustine's 2nd Sunday: Prayer of Morning Worship - 15 adults
4th Sunday: Traditional Communion Service - 15 adults

Occasional Offices and Other Events

St Mary's Last year we celebrated 5 Weddings, 9 Baptisms and 11 Funerals/ interment of ashes. So far this year we have 4 Weddings already booked. Flower festivals, Lent Lunches and Songs of Praise are arranged occasionally.

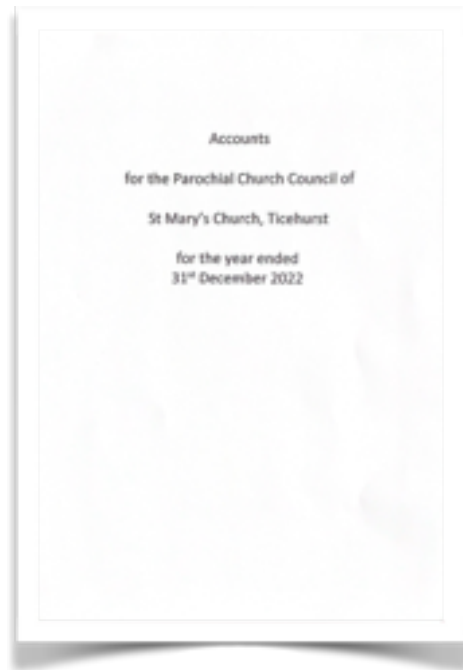
St Augustine's has occasional Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms. It also holds an annual Harvest Supper.

Additional information

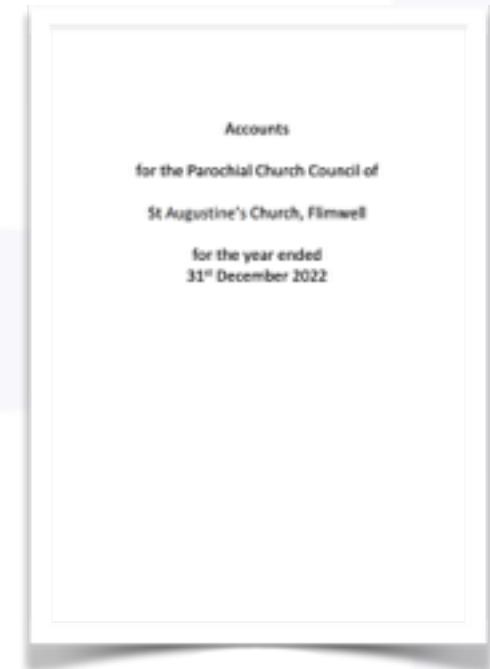
The prospective incumbent may find it helpful to know that:

- a. Both parishes have enthusiastic and experienced Wardens: Judith Whiteman (St Mary's) and Jaye Hughes (St Augustine's)
- b. The benefice benefits from two active and highly supportive patrons
- c.. St Mary's is well-maintained and considered in good repair. St Augustine's faces a number of material challenges which will require external fund raising.
- d. The balance sheet for St Mary's is strong.
- e. The joint benefice is in Rotherfield Deanery, under the Archdeacon of Hastings and the Bishop of Lewes.

Financial Information - please see separate PDF documents attached



Appendix One: Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church, Ticehurst for the year ended 31st December 2022



Appendix Two: Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Augustine's Church, Flimwell for the year ended 31st December 2022