



# Heathfield Benefice

*The Church of England in Your Community*

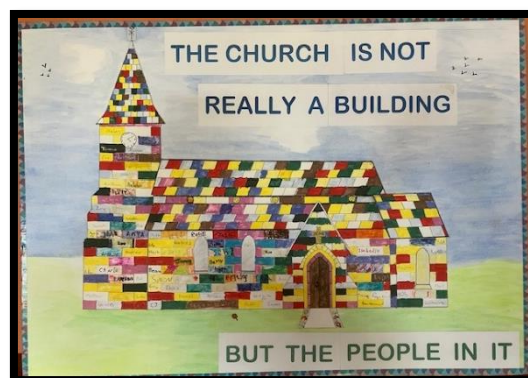
*In life. In love. In loss.*

## Parish Profile 2023



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*A collage made by the children with names written on the bricks.*



<https://www.heathfieldbenefice.org.uk/home.htm>



[https://www.facebook.com/HeathfieldBenefice1?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/HeathfieldBenefice1?locale=en_GB)



**Heathfield Benefice**  
*The Church of England in Your Community*  
*In life. In love. In loss.*

## Introduction from the Bishop of Chichester

### 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**

**Our mission is to be a single church family, offering a genuine welcome to all within a caring, prayerful worshipping community, faithful to biblical teaching that inspires active discipleship.**



## Who we are looking for

Our new incumbent will have a heart for prayer and mission and for joyfully proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; they will continue the work of bringing us together as a single church family; they will help us to continue to forge links with other churches in the parish, with local families and with the wider communities; and they will encourage and enable lay ministry, and in turn be willing to be assisted.

## What we will provide for our incumbent

Our new incumbent will be aided and supported, in prayer and in practice, by the ministry team which currently comprises three Readers and two retired clergy.

The vicarage (see below) is a modern, detached, four-bedroomed home which has undergone significant improvements in the past few years and is in good decorative order.



## Our interregnum prayer

Loving God, during this time of interregnum, we give thanks for your church in our community, for the many who work together and worship you faithfully.

Help us to stay true to our mission prayer for growth in your church and, as we serve you, may we see lives radically transformed.

Grant wisdom and discernment to those who are to choose a new vicar for this parish, that we may welcome the priest you have prepared for us, to lead us with joy and loving obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

## Our parish

The Parish of Heathfield lies in the middle of the High Weald in East Sussex. It is a mix of a growing town with outlying villages, hamlets and farms totaling about 10,000 people. New houses are being built on the outskirts of the town, bringing more people into the area.

One of the two parish churches, St Richard's, is located to one side of the town centre. The other parish church, All Saints', and a much smaller church, St George's, lie at the heart of the villages of Old Heathfield and Broad Oak respectively.

We are a new parish, having been formed from two diverse parishes in January 2022, still learning to live and work together, and to grow as a single church.

Our services are mostly Eucharistic.

We are slowly becoming more mission-oriented and outward looking, and we are establishing and developing relationships with organisations, schools and other churches in the parish.

## The recent history of the parish

Until 2016, our parish was two separate and diverse parishes, namely St Richard's Heathfield and All Saints' Old Heathfield with St George's Broad Oak. Each parish had their own priest and, although we did have some contact and occasional joint services together, we functioned completely independently.

In 2016, the parishes of Heathfield and Old Heathfield were brought together to form the United Benefice of Heathfield. Led by a new incumbent, the two parishes began to find more and better ways of working together.

In January 2022, following a further pastoral reorganisation, the two parishes became a single parish, the Parish of Heathfield. It is still better-known locally as Heathfield Benefice, which helps to distinguish us from the civic Heathfield and Waldron Parish.

The combined electoral roll has just over 100 people.

## Our logo



In 2017, the PCCs of the two parishes decided that we should re-brand the Benefice, to demonstrate our aims for unity and mission. The result was this logo.

In creating the logo, we wanted to communicate something of the strength of God in the midst of a confusing and imperfect world. It reminds us that however much we get things wrong, and however broken the world around us might be, God is always there to show us the way and to love us unconditionally.

When we became a single parish in 2022, we decided to keep this logo and branding as most people had got used to the word 'benefice'.

## Who we are

We are a very young parish and aspire to be one loving church family, accepting that for some there are historical ties to a particular church building or a particular mission or particular churchmanship. As a growing congregation which is increasingly focussed on the



Benefice, rather than a specific church building, people are becoming used to a service pattern which is feasible for one priest, though we are always welcoming of our lay ministers and the contributions of our local retired clergy to celebrate or preach.

We have achieved a great deal of change and innovation through our previous Mission Action Plan (MAP) and spent considerable time as a PCC building our current MAP which runs from 2023-2026 (a copy is on our website). We designed this current MAP for two phases of activity: for interregnum, and then for the arrival and impact of a new vicar for the Benefice. This meant we trusted in our wide range of activities within church and through work in the community, and prioritised a first phase of consolidation to ensure a

strong sense of mission. We identified three missional priorities: Listening to God, Developing our Children and Families ministry, and building Transformational Worship. Underlying these priorities are three guiding principles: Doing a Few Things and Doing them Well, Being Open and Welcoming to All, and Being Generous. We see this MAP as a living, continuous source of reference for us all.

There will be challenges in every parish. In ours, our buildings require much care and attention, our older parishioners need special prayer and support, our newcomers need to feel welcomed and encouraged to become involved without being overburdened, and our children and working families need a variety of ministry which may overlap but will not always fit with other parishioners' needs or the traditional ways of coming together to worship. Currently, there are no teenagers in our congregation (but the local non-conformist churches have very active youth groups, with specialist youth workers).



*Family Service; Noah's Ark*

In Heathfield there are many other Christians offering great community service and we are a strong part of that collaborative work through Churches Together in Heathfield & District. We aim to build on activities which work, try new ones, and be prepared to stop if they don't work. We are especially blessed with a strong and willing PCC, open to new ideas, and a range of parishioners prepared to help with services, pastoral care and outreach work.

## Prayer in the parish

Prayer has a key part in the life of our church.

- Members of the congregation prepare and lead intercessions at our services every Sunday, as well as reading the lessons for the day.
- A group meets together to pray every Saturday morning at 9am, either in person or on Zoom. Part of that time is always used to pray for the parish.
- A group meets every Wednesday morning to pray for healing.
- The ministry team meets at 9am every Monday morning, to review the weekend, to pray for the needs of those we have met or heard about, and to pray for the week ahead.
- It had become a habit for the incumbent, curate and Readers to meet every other month for at least half a day, partly to discuss business but also to pray and relax together. The Readers hope to be able to resume this with our new incumbent as part of our mutual support.
- We currently have two home groups, one of which is for those who are relatively new to the Christian faith.
- All the churches are usually open every day during the daytime for anyone to come and spend some time in quiet reflection.





## Current pattern of services

The table shows the general pattern throughout the year, though there are occasional necessary exceptions, such as Remembrance Sunday. This pattern was developed so that it would be possible for one priest to be able realistically to preside at all the services and be able to spend time with members of the congregation after each service.

	First Sunday	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
08.00	<b>BCP HC (said)</b> All Saints'		<b>BCP HC (said)</b> All Saints'		
10.00	<b>Holy Communion</b> All Saints'	<b>Holy Communion</b> St Richard's	<b>Saints Alive! (with HC)</b> All Saints'	<b>Holy Communion</b> St Richard's	<b>Holy Communion</b> AS or StR
15.00		<b>Holy Communion</b> St George's		<b>Afternoon Praise (not HC)</b> St George's	
18.00			<b>Choral Evensong</b> St Richard's		

The 8am service is BCP Holy Communion at All Saints' Church. It is a quiet, said service, with a relatively small congregation.

The total number in congregations on a Sunday averages about 65. The largest congregations, currently about 45-50 in number, are at 10am services. These are Common Worship Holy Communion, with the congregation using booklets appropriate to the season.

Saints Alive! is a slightly shorter, less formal service, with families and children particularly in mind. Music at this service is led by the music group.

10am services are live-streamed and can be accessed from the homepage on the website.

The choir is exceptional and leads the singing at one service each Sunday, usually at 10am except on the third Sunday, with organ accompaniment. Mass settings are used but only in so far as the Gloria/Kyries, Sanctus & Benedictus and Agnus Dei are sung, in addition to four hymns. The Eucharistic prayer is said. Choral Evensong is BCP and includes a short sermon. All the musicians, including our Choir Director and organists, give of their time and talent without payment.



Afternoon Praise is unique to St George's; it is a short service with a sermon, often led by one of the parish's Readers.

### Wednesday morning services

In addition to Sunday services, there is a service of Holy Communion every Wednesday at 9.30am. On the first Wednesday of the month, it is held at St George's and includes prayers for healing. On all other Wednesdays the service is at St Richard's. On a third Wednesday, our Mothers' Union group attends and contributes to the service and then has a meeting afterwards.

All Wednesday services of Holy Communion are said services, with the congregation using a booklet following Common Worship appropriate to the season. The congregation usually numbers from 10 to 20.

### Other services

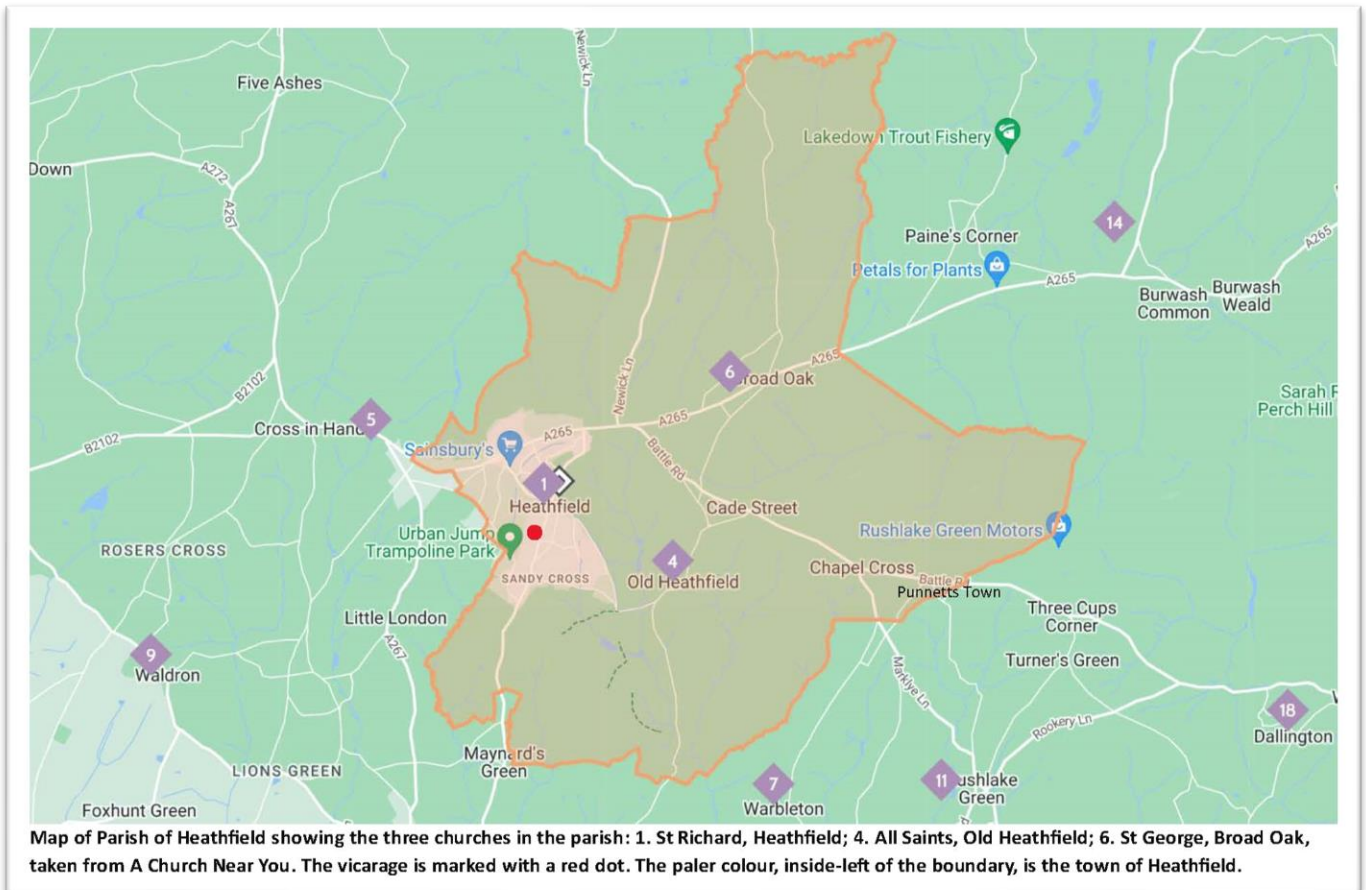
Services outside the normal pattern include Compline during Advent and Lent, the Triduum services in Holy Week, Remembrance Sunday, Advent and Christmas carol services, and a Walking Crib service on Christmas Eve. The Christmas services are well-attended by local people for whom these may be their only attendance of the year.

There are a few baptisms each year (five in 2022). Recently they have all been conducted on Sunday afternoons, though we welcome families who would like their child to be baptized during a Sunday morning service.

There are on average six weddings a year, usually at the photogenic All Saints' Church.

Funeral services sometimes include burials in the churchyard or, later, a burial of ashes in one of the Gardens of Remembrance. In 2022 there were six funerals and three burials of ashes. There is a newly built crematorium less than four miles south of Heathfield; our previous incumbent and one of the Readers took six services there in 2022.





## The church buildings & halls

**All Saints' Church in Old Heathfield** is a 14<sup>th</sup> century Grade 2\* listed parish church and has many features which have been added over the centuries. The belltower has 8 bells which are rung on Sunday mornings and on special occasions. A major re-ordering at the west end was carried out over a decade ago by adding a vicar's vestry, a toilet and a bell ringing platform; an area known as The Space was made to provide an open area for hospitality and meetings; it includes a kitchen (cunningly hidden) and storage. Currently, the seating in the main body of the church is Victorian box pews. While the main structure of the building is sound and in good repair, the interior will need some significant attention in the next few years. When additional seating is set out in The Space, the church can seat 250 people.

Occasionally visitors from America come to view the memorial window for Revd Richard Hunt (see right), the Vicar of Heathfield from 1602-1606, who sailed as chaplain with the 1607 expedition to found the colony of Jamestown, Virginia.



The churchyard is one of the largest in Sussex. There are a few burials every year. There are nineteen war graves in the churchyard, and we care for the graves on behalf of the War Graves Commission. There is also a Garden of Remembrance.

**St Richard's Church** is also a parish church, built of brick under a tiled roof, and is in good repair. The nave was dedicated in 1912 and was consecrated in 1918 following the addition of a chancel. In 1963 the south aisle was added and a Garden of Remembrance was laid out.

The main entrance was updated in the early 2000s to accommodate a toilet with disabled access and a washing up area; new doors with glass panels give a more welcoming appearance and a new path ensures easy access from the church car park. The church can seat up to 250 people and has been used for hustings and concerts as well as church services.

St Richard's Church Hall (see right), which can accommodate up to 100 people, is a detached building next to the church. It is used by many church and community groups. It has a stage, a fitted kitchen and a number of toilets including one with disabled access. It is an important source of income as it can be hired out to individuals, families or groups for meetings, activities and hospitality. A snooker club has rented the basement room for many years.



**St George's Church** was constructed from cedarwood just over sixty years ago (see below). By the nature of its construction it has a limited lifespan in its present form, but it is a highly valued hub for the worshipping people of Broad Oak. It can accommodate up to 50 people.



A Parish Room, accommodating about 25 people, was added to the back of St George's in 1981. This is used for hospitality after every service, and by various groups and activities during the week. Linking the church and the parish room is a small vicar's vestry with an area for making hot drinks, and also a toilet with disabled access.

## Heathfield Vicarage

The vicarage is located to one side of Heathfield town, with a few useful local shops nearby. It is a five-minute walk from St Richard's Church and approximately two miles from each of the other churches.

Built in 1986, the house is spacious and light-filled, and has been maintained to a high standard. In 2017 the property was fitted with a new kitchen, a new family bathroom and a new ensuite in the master bedroom. All the windows and outer doors were replaced in 2019. The loft space is mostly boarded, with good access.



At the back of the house, which faces west, a raised terrace overlooks a large, secure garden which is mainly grass with shrubs.

At the front, a good-sized garage has space for one car and there is additional parking for at least two more vehicles. The lockable, large, enclosed porch is a sun trap on a sunny morning.

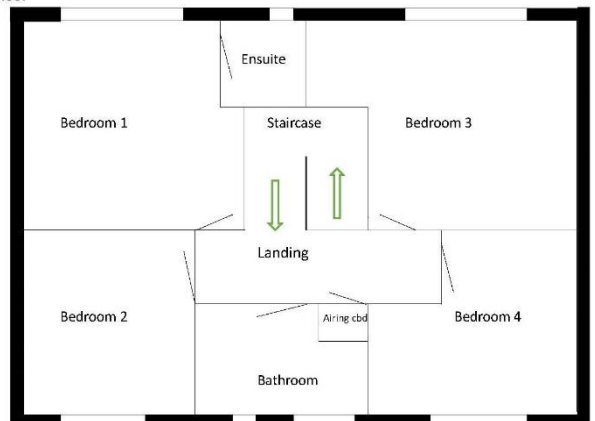
Heathfield Vicarage

Ground Floor

Not drawn to exact scale



First Floor



## Who we are looking for

We recognize that different people will have different strengths and weaknesses, so we have set out many characteristics, hoping that our new incumbent will have a good proportion of them.

Area of experience / personal quality	Essential	Desirable
Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordained priest within the Church of England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous experience of incumbency, or other experience of leadership</li> </ul>
Vision for ministry and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to work with others to encourage the growth of spiritual life and attract people to the Good News of Jesus Christ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to inspire and lead the development of parish church worship</li> <li>• Values the traditional whilst promoting the new</li> <li>• An engaging preacher and communicator</li> <li>• Has experience of work with children and young people</li> <li>• Is committed to outreach and pastoral care</li> <li>• Has a heart for mission and prayer</li> <li>• Has experience as a training incumbent for curates</li> </ul>
Engagement with community life and public issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of engagement with and ministry in schools</li> <li>• Has an understanding of how to build, create and maintain social networks of which the church is or might be a part</li> </ul>
Formation of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will encourage discipleship and involvement in mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will enable and encourage others to connect their Christian faith with everyday life</li> <li>• Able to spot potential for ministry within the local community and be able to nurture vocation</li> </ul>
Management of resources and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to use Microsoft Office and/or other IT software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of parish finance/governance frameworks and systems and how risk is managed</li> <li>• Good organizational skills</li> <li>• Able to make things happen</li> <li>• Help us develop our social media presence</li> </ul>
Leadership of, working with, and oversight of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will encourage lay leadership and participation in all areas of parish life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to work with a ministry team of Readers and retired clergy in the benefice</li> <li>• Willing to work with other church leaders in Heathfield and the surrounding area</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the means to be able to travel around a large parish easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive</li> <li>• Approachable; compassionate; a good listener</li> </ul>

## Finances

Each year an annual budget is drawn up by the Treasurer (in conjunction with the finance subcommittee) and the standing committee and presented for approval to the PCC.

The 2022 end of year accounts record basically a breakeven position, based on a turnover of £148,597 but this included two substantial legacies and grants amounting to £40,655.

The average parish ministry costs in this diocese for a parish with a full-time priest is £78,950. We are unable to meet this at the present time but we are actively working to increase the proportion we give each year. In the past two years, we have increased the percentage by more than 10%. In 2022 we contributed £43,000 (55%) which was £2.5k more than the Deanery Treasurer had asked us to pledge. In 2023, we are striving to achieve even better.

In 2022 many people responded very positively when we held a Generous Giving Week, increasing their regular giving by an average of 18%. A significant proportion of our congregation now give via the Parish Giving Scheme, PGS, which has gift aid applied monthly, thus helping cash flow. We also benefit from the Revenue's Gift Aid tax reclaim facility and the GASDS tax reclaim programme.

Raising money for the general maintenance of all our buildings and for the work and mission of the church is a challenge. We are currently reviewing how we generate income. We have recently invested in equipment to allow contactless giving at all our church buildings.

The people of the village of Old Heathfield, in particular, have been generous in addressing structural issues with All Saints' Church building when the needs have been made known, largely at the instigation of FASCOH, the Friends of All Saints' Church Old Heathfield.

Early in 2023, the PCC made the decision, due to the total amount of monies received, or likely to be received, to become a registered charity and this has duly been approved and has become operational for the present year's accounts.

## FASCOH

The Friends of All Saints' (FASCOH) was formed in 2004 - with the aim of supporting the restoration and maintenance of the ancient church of All Saints' (see below) which plays an important role in the religious and community needs of the small village of Old Heathfield. Its Trustees are drawn from the local area and have appropriate expertise embracing business, education, creative and local skills. All appointed vicars, upon licensing, become ex-officio trustees of FASCOH which is in itself an independent registered charity.



The serving trustees have been committed to raising funds to support a number of critical improvements necessary for the structure and amenities at All Saints' Church, and have raised over £250k for these purposes. These have included the restoration of the spire, replacement of the heating system, and the aforementioned reorganisation of the west end of the church.

Currently the Trustees of FASCOH, together with the PCC, are discussing the future needs of All Saints' and exploring the priorities for the next 10 years. The aim is to ensure that it provides facilities which match the expectations of a public building, available not only for worship but also for a wider range of community initiatives embracing education, music, history, and local matters of interest, yet still recognise that it must be a focal point for Christian worship.



The key needs that have been identified include: a re-plastering and redecoration of the entire interior of the building; improved and more versatile lighting; a new organ; flexible staging; a full IT technical installation; the introduction of flexible seating throughout; additional lighting outside the church; and provision of a car park nearby (probably to be a shared facility with our nearby primary school and Heathfield Park Cricket Club).

Inevitably, this is going to cost a considerable amount of money, and the skills to be found among the FASCOH Trustees, not only in organising active fundraising events for this specific purpose but also in applying for grants and loans, will be much in evidence in the coming years.

A brief overview of recent accounts can be viewed on the Charity Commission website:  
<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk>



## All Saints' and St Richard's CE Primary School

There are increasingly good links between the school and the parish. We have a written covenant with the school. One evening per year, a PCC meeting is held in one of the classrooms, so we can see at first-hand what they are doing.

The school lies about a 5-minute walk from All Saints' Church, and the children walk to the church for a school service five or six times a year.

Clergy and Readers are welcomed into the school to lead Collective Worship whenever they can. This used to happen weekly but currently, as we are without an incumbent and a curate, only one Reader is able to do this and the frequency has had to drop to an average of once every three weeks in addition to the above-mentioned services in church.

In 2022, our Choir Director started a Junior Choir for children in years 3 to 6 and they have sung occasionally at 10am Sunday services.

There are currently (in 2023) 95 children on the roll, aged 4 – 11, taught in five classes. The last SIAMS and Ofsted reports gave the school a 'Good' rating in all areas. The school is in federation with Herstmonceux CE Primary School. The Vicar of Heathfield is one of the governors, ex officio, and sits on the Ethos Committee. A member of the electoral roll is a foundation governor.

For more information, please visit the school website: [www.assr.e-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.assr.e-sussex.sch.uk)



What should our new vicar be like?  
"I want them to be kind. Needs to know about God."

## Heathfield town and villages within the parish of Heathfield

**Heathfield** – Heathfield is a small market town, with a good High Street of independent shops and four small-ish supermarkets which can provide all essentials. There are also restaurants, cafés and a selection of takeaways, a library and a post office. There are three very active non-conformist churches in the town, one of which has the prime site in the High Street. Due to the religious beliefs of the town's nineteenth century planners, the pubs are located on the outskirts of town and in the outlying villages.

The town has strong agricultural links due to the number of farms in close proximity. The annual agricultural Heathfield Show, held on the last Saturday in May, is a major event in East Sussex. There is a general market every Tuesday and a Farmers' Market on the third Saturday of the month.

Each August bank holiday Le Marché, a French Market, is held in collaboration with our twinned town of Forges-Les-Eaux. This takes place in the centre of town. Locally there are football, rugby, cricket and other sporting teams, and opportunities for getting involved in a varied range of clubs and activities - physical, intellectual and creative - including a Bonfire Society (often found in Sussex towns).

The Cuckoo Trail, which is a popular off-road walking and cycling trail, utilises the disused railway track; it begins in Heathfield and extends 14 miles south to the outskirts of Eastbourne. There are also many easily-reached public footpaths across fields and through local woodland which are peaceful and give good views across the High Weald. Further afield, the South Downs AONB is a 30-minute drive away, with the South Downs Way providing energetic walks over the Seven Sisters.

There are train links to London from Uckfield and Stonegate stations, each about 7 miles away; and a good bus service north to Tunbridge Wells and south to Eastbourne (via Hailsham and Polegate), where there are wide and varied shopping opportunities, restaurants, theatres, parks and clubs.

There are four villages and hamlets within the parish, each a mile or so from the town:

**Old Heathfield** was the original settlement before the railway (now disused) was built to transport agricultural goods to London. Our 14<sup>th</sup> century church, All Saints', is a central feature of the village, along with equally old The Star Inn public house, Heathfield Park Cricket Club and All Saints' and St Richard's Primary School.

**Cade Street**, a small hamlet close to Old Heathfield, is where the Heathfield War Memorial is located. Heathfield Community College (see next page) dominates the area. There is also a children's playground, a beacon and memorial garden. Here is also the main entrance to the privately-owned Heathfield Park.

**Broad Oak**, where St George's Church is located, has a small supermarket with a post office, a community hall and children's playground. Little Tottingworth Farm, with its farm shop and café, hosts the Heathfield Show.

**Punnetts Town** is on the eastern edge of the parish, located along one of the many ridges. The village has a beacon, a football club, doctors' surgery, village hall and a primary school.

### **Primary and Secondary Schools in the parish**

In addition to our church primary school (described earlier), there are two other primary schools in our parish. We have occasional contact with them and this is an area of potential.

Heathfield Community College is a large comprehensive school in Old Heathfield for students aged 11 to 18. It has 1500 pupils, including 250 in the sixth form. Occasionally some of the students give a concert in All Saints' Church. Three of the four School Pastors are from the Benefice and this is currently our main link with them. This too is an area of potential.

All Saints' and St Richard's CE Primary School, Old Heathfield –  
<https://www.assr.e-sussex.sch.uk/>

Parkside Community Primary & Preschool, Heathfield -  
<https://www.parksideprimary.org/>

Punnetts Town Community Primary School –  
<https://www.punnettstown.e-sussex.sch.uk/>

Heathfield Community College, Cade Street –  
<https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/>

There are also good private schools in the area, but none in the parish.

## Our Church in the community – serving the people of Heathfield

For some while we have been using a mission prayer for growth in the Benefice, following our engagement in Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG). Part of this prayer is asking the Holy Spirit to help us to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment and in service to our local community. We interpret this service widely and support a number of activities locally, both by ourselves and in partnership with others.

Benefice outreach includes our **Remembrance Sunday service** involving local service organisations both at the church and at the Heathfield war memorial in Cade Street. We hold **themed services** from time to time which involve people who may not worship with us but relate to us through their activities, for example our bellringers. Our **Christmas services**, in particular, draw in local people who are not habitual churchgoers.

We have an active **Mothers' Union** branch, a monthly **book club**, and engage closely with **Family Support Work**, a faith-motivated charity working with the Diocese to support children and families in Sussex. In winter 2022-23 we organised a weekly **Warm Welcome lunch**, designed to encourage those facing increased costs of living to join us for a free lunch and social space. However, this did not attract many in need, although our church members enjoyed the events. We continue to **give to food banks**, mainly through Family Support Work.



We promote **Messy church events** (see below) through the year – Messy Easter, Messy Harvest, Messy Christmas and a summer picnic – which attract local families with young children, most of whom do not engage with our Sunday services. Also in connection with our focus on children and families, we run two well-supported **Baby and Toddler groups** weekly in the Parish.



For older residents, we continue to engage with **Country Lunches**, held in a local village hall in Punnetts Town, which offers a value-priced lunch fortnightly for up to 50 elderly residents, some brought to the hall by local Age Concern bus. Each month we hold a **Friendship and Bereavement group** in Heathfield at a local café; this is organised by our ALM. We maintain regular **links with Heffle Court**, a local care home, by providing tea and conversation once a month, and the choir sings carols there each Christmas. In July 2023 we started a monthly **Holy Communion service in a local assisted living complex**.

Through **Churches Together in Heathfield & District (CTHD)**, we are involved in a **Good Friday Walk of Witness** through the town, and offer worship services and Forum venues

for the range of CTHD church representatives. Our Christmas services are publicised, as are other community events, through the CTHD network locally. As a key member of CTHD, we are involved in **servicing community lunches at Le Marché**; as a Benefice we also have **a stall at Le Marché** at which we share our free community magazine with information about the Benefice.

The **Heathfield Magazine** is a major part of our outreach, staffed by volunteers with a paid Design Editor and Printer, producing 1400 free copies each month which are distributed to homes and shops. The Magazine includes a Minister's Letter and news of church activities, along with general interest, community, sports and nature articles. The latest copy of the magazine can be downloaded from the Benefice website.

Our **Benefice website** – [www.heathfieldbenefice.co.uk](http://www.heathfieldbenefice.co.uk) - and **e-newsletter, The Grapevine**, to which over 200 people subscribe, also connect us with a much wider section of the community than those who come to church.

Although we do have a Facebook account and livestream many of our services on YouTube, our social media presence does need improvement.

CTHD also supports **Heathfield Street Pastors** (patrolling weekly in the town or local areas), Prayer Pastors and **School Pastors** (patrolling weekly in term time at the local Community College. This initiative is organised under the auspices of Ascension Trust in London. Two Street Pastors and three of our four School Pastors are from Heathfield Benefice, which has enabled a stronger link with our local secondary school.



In a wider context, the Benefice is also active in Heathfield Christian Aid in fundraising activities from CA week collections to Lent Lunches and an autumn Sponsored Walk.

## Working within Dallington Deanery and Chichester Diocese

The Parish of Heathfield is engaged with the Deanery and the Diocese through individual representatives and through a range of Diocesan initiatives:

We have recently been a training parish, having had a Curate for three years up to 2022, and there is housing for a curate in Old Heathfield.

Over recent years we have participated in a number of Diocesan initiatives, most notably working with the Generous Giving Adviser, and attending a conference and a workshop for Leading your Church into Growth, which has been adopted in the parish.

In addition to having four Deanery Synod representatives, two members of the parish are elected Diocesan Synod representatives. We have an elected member on the Diocesan Council for Apostolic Life and on the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Sub-Committee (East), and another who is on the Dallington Deanery Synod standing committee.

We have an Authorised Lay Minister (ALM) trained for pastoral ministry and preaching, who supports our two Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) and a third Reader who has PTO. The Readers regularly attend Diocesan training programmes, both face to face and online.

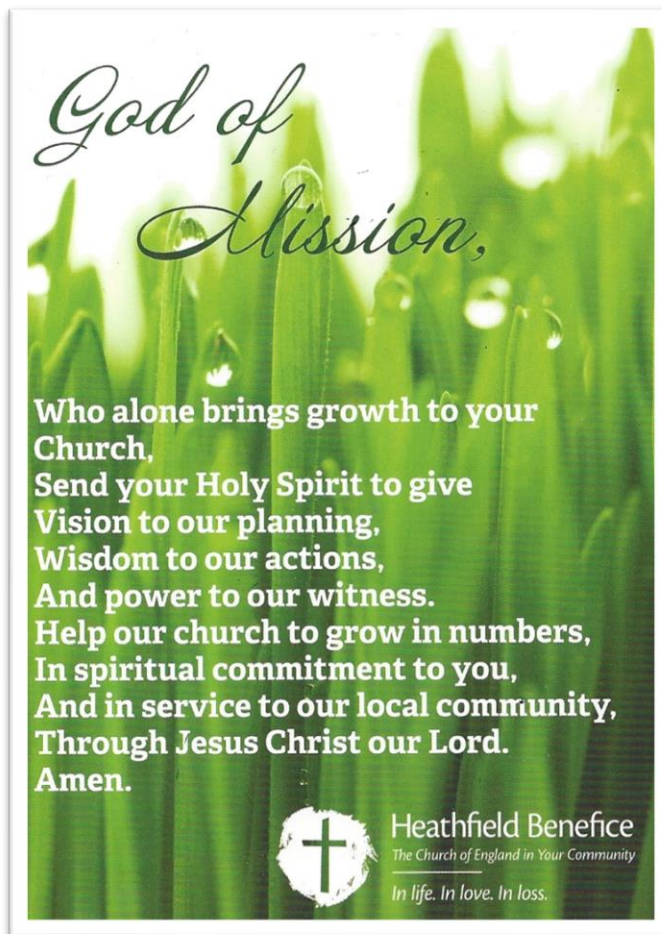
We follow the Diocesan Simple Quality Protects safeguarding programme. Our Parish Safeguarding Officer and her deputy ensure that everyone is up to date with required safeguarding training and, further to that, ensure that safeguarding is kept in mind as we prefer 'prevention rather than cure' as far as possible.



The parish actively supports Family Support Work, the diocese-based charity, by providing a base at St George's for the local case worker and by regularly collecting food which can be distributed where it is needed. We also hold an annual Toy Service, for which toys are donated and then distributed by FSW to families who would otherwise have no gifts at Christmas time. One of our number is the current Chair of the local FSW Deanery Committee.

There are regular Deanery Chapter meetings for clergy, led by the Rural Dean, and also meetings with church leaders of the different denominations in and around Heathfield who are linked with Churches Together in Heathfield and District.

## Our mission prayer



## The dismissal from the end of our services

**Go with joyful urgency  
to love and serve the Lord  
that you may see lives radically transformed.**