Profile for the Appointment of a full time stipendiary **Associate Minister** for the Parishes of

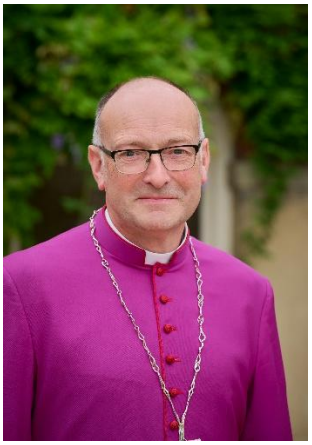
St Leonard, Hollington, St Ethelburga, West St Leonards and St Matthew, St Leonards on Sea



2026

DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER

TO KNOW · LOVE · FOLLOW JESUS



A Welcome from the Acting Bishop of Chichester

Thank you for your interest in a post within the Diocese of Chichester.

Across Sussex, our churches seek to be rooted in prayer, formed by Scripture, nourished by the Sacraments, and committed to serving our communities in Christ's name. We are deeply committed to the flourishing and renewal of parish life, believing that the Gospel has the power to transform lives, communities, and culture.

We are looking for priests whose faith in Jesus Christ inspires others to become his disciples, who value the parish as the heart of the Church's mission, and who can lead with wisdom, humility, and hope. We are not seeking superheroes, but authentic and prayerful clergy who share a passion for confident proclamation, generous service, and the building of God's Kingdom.

Bishop Ruth and I are encouraged by the increasing number of enquiries and applications for parish posts and are delighted to be licensing gifted women and men to serve across Sussex. We remain fully committed to supporting our parishes and are grateful that the Diocese continues to benefit from around 18% more serving clergy per head of population than most dioceses. We work hard to ensure our resources are used wisely in support of local mission and ministry.

We are equally committed to clergy wellbeing. We want our clergy to know that they are valued not simply for what they do, but for who they are. Our desire is to love, support, and treasure our parish clergy, helping them to flourish in their vocation and ministry.

Our vision is that every community should be served by a mission-focused parish, rooted in prayer, worship, witness, and service, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and helping people grow as his disciples.

This parish profile tells the story of a community seeking to live out that calling. I hope it will help you discern whether God may be inviting you to explore this opportunity further.

With the assurance of my prayers as you discern God’s ongoing vocation for you

+Will

Bishop of Lewes and Acting Bishop of Chichester

WELCOME



Dear potential applicant,

Thank you very much for your interest in this post as Associate Minister. I believe this is an exciting opportunity for an ordained colleague passionate about evangelism and discipleship.

This post combines three areas of responsibility. Firstly, you will be responsible for leading the ministry in the parish of St Leonard Hollington. This parish will be joining our family of churches with your appointment and you will live in their Rectory. The parish has a very high level of social deprivation and a population of over 13,000 people. The church is the only place of Christian worship in the parish. The current Sunday congregation is very small (approximately 30 people on average) so the task will be to lead the church into a new season of mission and ministry. We envisage this aspect of the role taking up around 3 days a week.

The second part of the role will be helping lead the discipleship and training of church members across all three churches. You will be responsible for co-ordinating all our midweek discipleship groups and helping provide courses and training events to equip people for ministry. The final part of the role will be to support St Ethelburga's Church school; St Leonards CE Primary Academy. You will help lead collective worship and support the staff in the delivery of RE. We also anticipate you being appointed by the academy trust to the Local Governing Body.

This post is being supported by the Diocese of Chichester as part of their Diocesan Growth Strategy. The vision is to establish a new family of churches, rooted in Anglican evangelical theology, to serve Christ here in St Leonards. As part of this initiative, the Diocese is part-funding a full-time Families and Schools Worker at St Matthews and a full-time Families and Community Worker at St Leonard Hollington. We are also hopeful of welcoming a Curate in 2027. Together with the existing part-time Families Worker at St Ethelburga's Church, this will form a substantial staff team with a shared evangelical vision.

I am therefore looking for an evangelical colleague to support us in this ministry. In particular, I am looking for someone committed to the ministry of word and prayer dependant on the Holy Spirit as the central means by which God grows his church. You would need to hold to orthodox evangelical convictions and be able to sign the CEEC Statement of Faith.

This is undoubtedly a challenging post but for the right person it is also an exciting opportunity to play a significant part in gospel growth and church revitalisation here in St Leonards on Sea.
If you would like to explore whether this might be a good fit, please do email me on matthew@stmatts.co.uk

Yours in Christ

Matthew Foy

DIOCESAN GROWTH STRATEGY

The Diocese of Chichester Growth Strategy is a ten-year plan to create vibrant, sustainable Christian communities of faith across Sussex. It is designed to reverse long-term decline in church attendance. Rooted in the vision to help people know, love, and follow Jesus, the strategy focuses on growth in both numbers and spiritual depth.



Our strategy aims to strengthen parishes through proven approaches such as apostolic partnerships to revitalise churches, investing in children and youth ministry, and supporting and developing excellent leaders. The initiative prioritises areas with high population and deprivation, particularly along the coastal strip and in Crawley, while offering a range of support to every parish that wants to grow.

Under God's grace, we pray that we might see 3,000 – 4,300 more people worshipping regularly by 2034, including up to 1,700 children and young people.

Key streams include:

·Revitalising 20 to 25 churches through partnerships and new leadership

·Expanding ministry with children, youth, & families, increasing the number of paid workers & supporting volunteers with training

·Introducing focal ministry, calling out local leaders to help our smaller churches thrive

·Developing excellent leaders through training and mentoring for clergy and lay ministers

·The strategy also expects to make 120 churches financially more sustainable and nurture new vocations, doubling the number entering ordained ministry and significantly increasing lay ministry.

The programme represents a £22.4 million investment over ten years, funded through:

£12.3 million from the national Diocesan Investment Programme.
£5.1 million from the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).
£5 million from parishes contributing towards local employed roles, mainly with children and youth.

OUR PROJECT

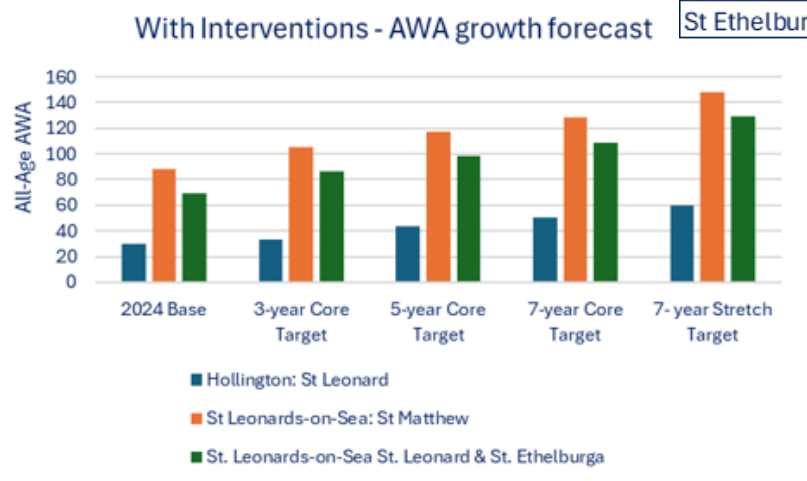
The vision is to establish a new family of churches working together in ministry and mission. As part of this strategy, Matthew Foy will shortly become the Priest-in-Charge of St Leonard Hollington. To enable this project to flourish, the diocese has committed to investing £368,000 over the next 6 years across the parishes. This includes £168,000 of funding towards the Associate Minister Post and £200,000 towards two lay posts, a Families and Schools Worker and a Families and Community Worker. The lay posts have a specific remit and responsibility for growth outcomes relating to children, young people and families. This will be accompanied by £200,000 of investment by the parishes.

This project is focused on helping local people from all three parishes to come to personal faith in Jesus Christ, to be baptised and confirmed and grow as disciples of Christ. Many of these people are likely to be from backgrounds with little knowledge of the Christian faith.

As a result of local people coming to a personal faith in Jesus Christ, the major growth outcomes are:

· Revitalisation of the current morning service at St Leonard Hollington, aiming for a return to growth by year 3, achieving sustainability by year 7.
· AWA growth of 20 adults and of 20 children and young people worshipping at St Matthew and St Ethelburga
· Launch a new afternoon service based in the St Leonard's church hall by year 4 which seeks to reach people who currently have no contact with the church.
· 5 new baptisms/ confirmations each year across the churches.

AWA:	2024 Base	3-year Core Target	5-year Core Target	7-year Core Target	7-year Stretch Target
St Leonard's	30	33	44	50	60
St Matthew	88	105	117	128	148
St Ethelburga	69	86	98	109	129



It is hoped that the investment will enable all three parishes to move towards having their own incumbent by the end of the project.

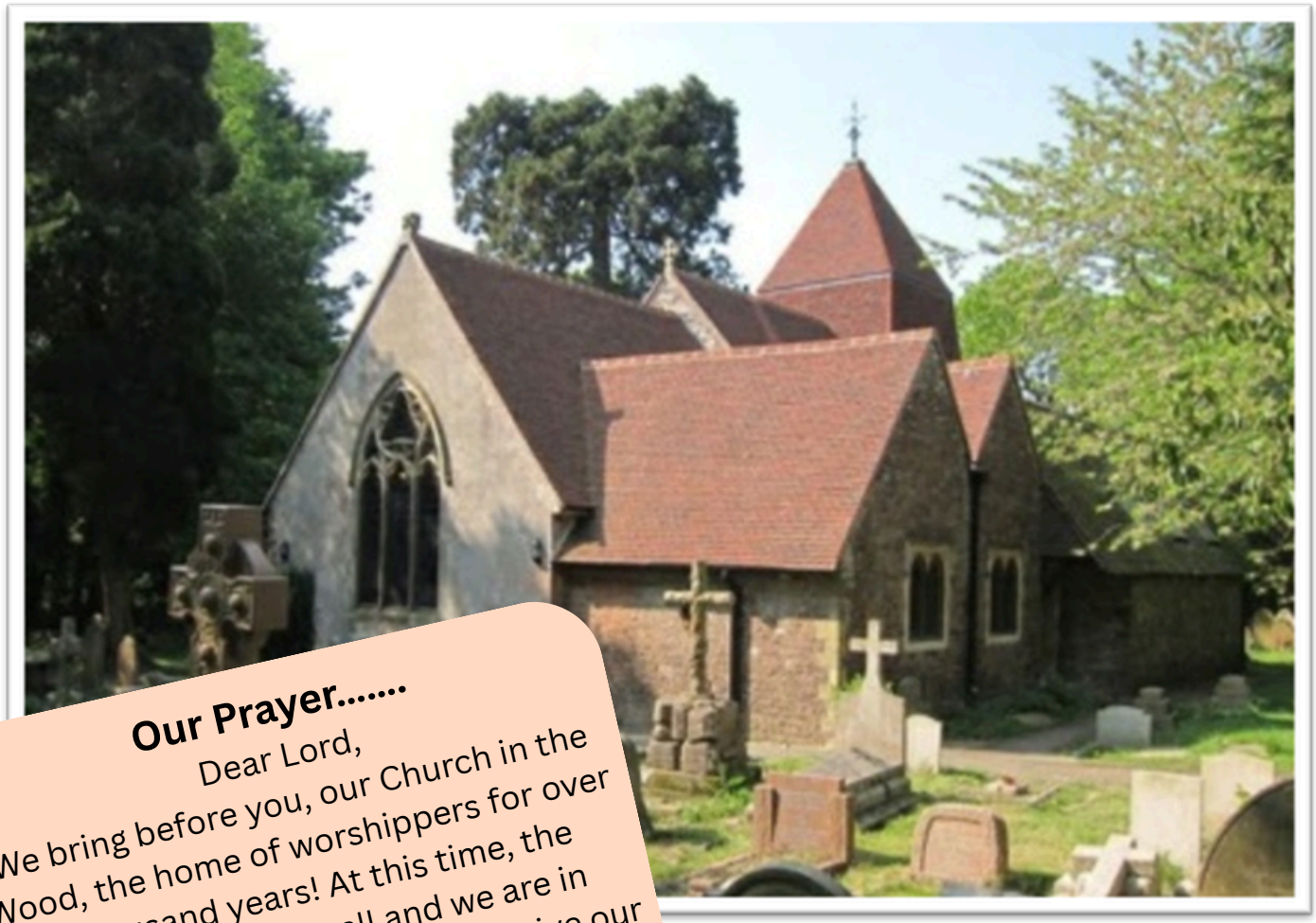
PERSONAL SPECIFICATION OF ASSOCIATE MINISTER

1. An ordained Anglican whose character reflects the gospel and who is growing in godliness.
2. An evangelical committed to the ministry of word and prayer dependent on the Holy Spirit.
3. A person who is able to teach and communicate the Gospel clearly, faithfully and engagingly in Sunday services, small groups and one-to-one conversations.
4. A person who enjoys being part of a wider ministry team.
5. A person with a track record of being able to encourage, disciple and equip church members.
6. A person who can build and sustain relationships with a wide cross section of the community.
7. A person who is comfortable across a range of evangelical worship styles and cultures.

The Associate Minister may also have:

1. Experience in developing lay leadership and ministry teams and discerning vocations.
2. Experience of leading new mission initiatives and/or community engagement.
3. Gifts in pastoral care, mentoring and leadership development.
4. Experience of working in a multi-generational and socially diverse parish context.

THE PARISH OF ST LEONARD HOLLINGTON
AFFECTIONATELY CHURCH IN THE WOOD



Our Prayer.....

Dear Lord,

We bring before you, our Church in the Wood, the home of worshippers for over a thousand years! At this time, the congregation is small and we are in anxious need of a shepherd to revive our congregation!

We pray for guidance as we embark on our partnership with St Matthew and St Ethelburga, and ask that with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will call an Associate Minister and two capable support workers to help us share the good news of the Gospel in our parish so that those who believe will come and join us.

Give our Priest-in-Charge, Matthew wisdom as he oversees this initiative, and equip our congregation with a willingness to make the changes needed to attract new believers!

Praise and Glory to you Lord!

Amen



OUR CHURCH

Known affectionately as “Church in the Wood” the core building is over 1000 years old with records of rectors going back to 1344! The church is maintained to standards recommended by English Heritage and is in good condition, the last major restoration having taken place in 2009/10 at a cost of £250k. We have recently purchased a new sound system as services are presented on LCD screens. A digital organ was installed about 10 years ago. There is comfortable seating for 100 people attending services and an adjacent meeting room for teas after the service.

Surrounding the church is a large churchyard with burials recorded from 1639, as well as a number of graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The churchyard is full with no space left for new burials, baring where space exists

In a family grave for another burial or the internment of ashes.











Services

10.30 Holy Communion: 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays
10.30 Morning Worship: 1st and 3rd Sundays
As well as the occasional offices of baptism, weddings, funeral and memorial services.
The PCC have agreed that the Service time will change to 11.00am once the Associate Minister is appointed.

Congregation

Attendance at the Sunday service is 28–32 parishioners with 40 attending Christmas Eve, and Easter Sunday. The congregation is largely elderly with some parishioners having attended services at Church in the Wood for decades!
Currently we have one family with two boys attending regularly.
There are 43 names on the Electoral Roll, of which 22 are resident in the Parish.





Other Activities

Bible Study: A bible study group of 6 – 8 regulars meet as a house group each Wednesday at 10.00am.

Community Group: The Community group meets fortnightly and attracts 20 – 25 members, not all regular church goers. Whilst the group meets as a craft group, it serves as an opportunity to chat and meet others!
Other annual events include a Harvest Supper and a Christmas Fayre.

Parish Rooms (Gibbons Memorial Hall)

The Parish Rooms, built around 1930 were bequeathed to the local community as a charitable trust to provide educational, religious and social purposes for the poorer members of the community. Whilst being a separate charity, the status enables the Hall to raise money from grants as a community building. The trustees managing the hall comprise the Rector, the two churchwardens and two individuals appointed by the PCC for a period of 4 years.

The hall is well used for a number of activities (Table tennis, Dance group, the Community Group, a Youth Club, as well as children's parties.) The running costs are self- financed and do not present a burden to the church.



The Ashburnham Trust are planning a "Community Outreach" project to start in September of 2026 where they will be offering free lunches one day a week in an initiative to engage with the local community.

The Gibbons Memorial Field

The Gibbons Memorial Field is another separate charity which manages the Gibbons Field. The trustees are the Rector and two members from the parish. The field is let out on 50 year leases to a football club and a green bowls club, as a result little active management is required as these clubs undertake the maintenance work.

The PCC

The PCC meets every two months to discuss finance, building and churchyard maintenance, safeguarding, services and events as well as any other matters related to the running of the church.

The present composition of the PCC is the Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Church Wardens, Safeguarding officer and five ex-officio members. It is envisaged that the Priest in Charge, will chair the meetings once the partnership with the other churches is implemented.

Finances

Receipts for the year ending December, 2025, were £54245 (2024 - £56945), which included £14006 interest from funds invested following the sale of St Anne's. Payments for the same period were £78974 (2024 - £105894) which included £11520 expenditure on fixed assets (Sound system) and £42000 Parish share. The deficit of payments over receipts was £24729 (2024 - £48938). Further details of our finances can be found in the report tabled at our Annual General Meeting and are available on request. In 2026 the Parish Share has been set at £30000 giving the Parish a breakeven budget for the year.

THE PARISH

The Parish comprises three wards, Hollington, Wishing tree, and Ashdown, with a total of 13000 residents. Whilst social housing is present in much of the parish, there are large areas of freehold housing as well as an industrial estate. The landscape is hilly with woodland with a number of streams. Stagecoach provide a moderately effective bus service with most routes starting and terminating at Hastings railway station. There are no other places of worship in the parish.

There are three community primary schools in the parish: Churchwood Primary Academy, Robsack Primary Academy and Hollington Primary. All are run by the Pioneer Academy Trust. Hollington Primary has historically been looked after by the parish of St John's Hollington. There is also New Horizons Schools which is a Special School that supports pupils with an EHCP with a primary need of SEMH.

There is a Tesco superstore situated less than half a mile from Church in the Wood.



THE PARISH OF ST ETHELBURGA WEST ST LEONARDS



We are a friendly and welcoming church for all ages and backgrounds in West St Leonards. We believe that church is for the least, the last and the lost. We try to be missional in all that we do. As a church we are firmly within the evangelical tradition of the Church of England but feel that the church is open to everybody, wherever they are on their faith journey.



The church was constructed in 1929 and is situated centrally in the parish of St. Leonard and St. Ethelburga. The building is traditional in design having elevations of brick and stone beneath a tiled roof. However, the interior of the roof was constructed to resemble that of a traditional Sussex Tithe Barn and this adds to the character of the building.





Since we have leased the church hall to a local business, the church has doubled as a community meeting space. This has been helped by replacing the pews with chairs to provide a larger, more flexible space.



In 2017 a modern kitchen area was created at the rear of the church alongside a toilet with disabled access. In 2018 the heating system was upgraded and a new boiler installed so the church is warm in the winter months.

Our main Sunday Service is at 10am each week and includes activities for children. Each month there is a service of Holy Communion and an All Age Service. We also have a monthly prayer meeting. We have a number of ALMs, four of whom have permission to preach. We have a light breakfast on the first Sunday of each month and occasional bring and share lunches. We have a Sunday congregation of between 50 – 60 including children and have had a number of new families join us recently. Our electoral roll is 62 with 25 members resident in the parish.



The Church ready for the Maundy Thursday meal









We provide a variety of groups for the children and youth. On Thursday mornings we host a busy parent and toddler group called Morning Stars. Each month we have a Messy Church and a youth group called Ignite (shared with St Matthews). We are very fortunate to have a part-time Families Worker, Sara Ainsworth, who co-ordinates these events with a number of church members.

Ready for Morning Stars Toddlers



Craft time at Messy Church





Sara Ainsworth
Our Families Worker



Sharing time and activities at Ignite Youth Group



Our link church school is St Leonards Church of England Primary Academy based in Collinswood Drive. We have good links with the school and our minister leads Collective Worship every week. A team from the church also lead assemblies through Open the Book and the children visit the church for special services as well as Easter, Pentecost and Christmas.



The OTB team ready for our presentation



SoundLab Concert held July 2024. We had in the region of 75 people and everyone had a very enjoyable afternoon with tea and cakes.

DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER ACADEMY TRUST

A community choir (SoundLab) meets on Thursday evenings and we have a couple of concerts from them during the year. We also have a monthly Poetry group.

We enjoy hosting special events to welcome in our local community, such as a St George's Day lunch with the West St Leonard's Forum. We also share our Maundy Thursday evening meal and Holy Communion with St Matthew's Church.

Our PCC meet bi-monthly to discuss and plan for the church.

THE PARISH OF ST MATTHEW ST LEONARDS ON SEA

St Matthews is an Evangelical Anglican Church in the Silverhill area of St Leonards on Sea. Our vision is to "help local people follow Jesus Christ".



Our Congregation

We have been blessed with a diverse congregation with members of the church family spanning from new-born through to those in their 90s with a number of different nationalities and cultures. Our congregation is made up of a mix of people from different denominational backgrounds. On average we have **90** attendees at our Sunday service and over Christmas we enjoyed greatly increased attendances across a range of services culminating in 221 people attending our Christingle service in 2025. There are currently 86 names on our electoral roll, 15 of whom live in the parish.

We give thanks to God for some significant growth over the past 5 years and we trust in the Lord that this growth will continue, numerically and spiritually. Over the past 12 months we have conducted **4 adult baptisms and 3 infant baptisms**. This is the highest number of adult baptisms in one year that the church has conducted for many decades.

We are currently recruiting a full time **Families and School's Worker** to help us sustain and build upon this growth. We also employ two part time **Administrators** and a **Caretaker** to support our ministry.

Please see some photos of our most recent baptisms at St Matthews









OUR SERVICES

Our Sunday worship is at 11am each week. Within these services we offer a **Creche** for 0-4 yr olds, **Sunday club** serving reception-Yr6, and **Impact** serving Yrs 7-11. Our sung worship is generally modern in style, with communion once a month.







We have a **Creche** room for 0-4 yrs as well as a childrens area to the rear of the church for those wanting to remain in the service with their children.

A joint Maundy Thursday Meal with St Ethelburga's









Fun at our Half term Holiday Club for children from Reception age through to Year 6

Our Beliefs

The PCC has adopted the Evangelical Alliance's Statement of Faith and we require all our pastoral staff and preachers to agree to the Church of England Evangelical Council's Statement of Faith (including the additional declarations). Our PCC has 13 members and a PCC secretary. We meet every two months. We are committed members of the Sussex Gospel Partnership.

Discipleship Groups

There are currently **5** discipleship groups meeting mid-week of which **42** attend.

We also have the stand-alone ministries "Ladies Connect" with **14** attendees and "Friendlies" with **13** attendees. These two groups are long-established and well-appreciated by those who attend.



Ladies Connect meeting on Monday mornings



"Friendlies" meeting on Tuesday afternoons

School Links

St. Matthew's is the designated parish church for St Paul's CE Primary Academy. The church supports the academy's curriculum by leading collective weekly worship, hosting school services at the church and organizing RE visits.



Christmas window decorated by St Paul's Academy Art Club

St Paul's CE Academy



St Paul's Academy Easter visit

BUILDING HISTORY

St Matthew's was originally built in 1860–1861. Due to a rapidly growing local population, that first building was replaced with the current, much larger Victorian gothic revival-styled church, which was consecrated in 1884.
The main church building is a designated Grade II listed building.



A visit from our local MP to see the newly refurbished hall

Alongside the main church building, we have a very actively used church centre on site which serves as an important link for us to our local community. We have recently completed a circa £60,000 refurbishment of the main hall which saw a number of improvements made and accessibility issues addressed.





The grant we received enabled us to put in new double glazing, a disabled toilet/baby change and the flooring resealed.



HASTINGS AND ST LEONARDS

Aside from the famous “Battle of Hastings in 1066” which everyone knows, Hastings and St Leonards are relatively young towns with a population of 91000, with much of the residential area having being built in the last 100 years. The sea front is primarily a tourist area with a pier, the old town, and a working fishing harbour as well as numerous café’s, restaurants, mini golf, and amusements for when the weather is wet. Despite the problem of deprivation, the community, supported by the Council, organise a constant stream of activities throughout the year, many of them to raise money for charity! The towns have a low ethnic minority of less than 5% with an increasing number of Central and Eastern European immigrants. There are few reported incidents of racism or religious intolerance, whereas crime statistics are slightly higher than national average, largely due to the high level of unemployment. There is little major industry, however there are a number of small cutting edge technical companies specialising in electronics and engineering products. The area is well served with supermarkets and major retailers.









THE RECTORY





The rectory is a 4 bedroomed detached house with private drive and a stand-alone brick garage. Conveniently, the church is a three minute walk from the rectory. Built in the 1990's the rectory has:

· Ground floor consisting of a reception, a study, fitted kitchen, utility room, dining room and lounge as well as a downstairs toilet.

· First floor has a master bedroom and three smaller bedrooms, a shower room with toilet and a bathroom and toilet. There is also an airing cupboard.

· Gas fired central heating.

· The garden has a grass area of approximately 84m2 with shrubbery at the rear and sides. The property is enclosed at the sides and rear with a tall brick wall.



HOUSE IS UNFURNISHED - Pictures with furniture have been created by AI to show the full potential!











