

# SNAPSHOT OF OUR PARISH TODAY

## Our Churches

### ST MARY'S CHURCH, FORDINGBRIDGE



The largest parish church in the Parish. It dates substantially from c.1300. A major re-ordering took place 1903-06, with great influence from the Oxford movement. It is a light building with a wide nave and side aisles, a long chancel, High Altar and a North Chancel. A small choir vestry with toilet and a small sacristy are on the southside of the building. At the west of the south aisle there is hospitality area, much used for coffee after services, café church, concerts, and some small funeral teas.

Vestments are worn at all Eucharist celebrations, and the sacrament is reserved in the ambry together with the oil used at Holy Baptism throughout the parish and for the anointing of the sick and last rites. A team of clergy and lay people take the sacrament to the sick and housebound. It is the tradition that at all major festivals there will be a procession and the Gospel read from the nave crossing. Incense is also used on High days. The Sanctus is rung at the words of the institution and servers assist at all Holy Communion celebrations. We are very lucky to have a committed and talented band of bell ringers, who ring for each morning 10.00.a.m. service and other services as well as weddings. The robed choir is of a high standard, and each week an anthem is sung. The choir has two musical directors, both talented organists. At Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany carol services are held. At Christmas we have a Crib service with a congregation of 200 + and many carol concerts. The Easter Triduum is kept, from Palm Sunday, with a procession from the town marketplace. Maundy Thursday service has washing of feet and stripping of the Altars. A

vigil is held on Holy Saturday, with the lighting of the new fire and the paschal candle. Other major services are observed, and Remembrance Sunday will see the church full, with over 300 people. At All Souls there is a well-attended evening service. The normal Sunday pattern is to be found in the pattern of service in this appendix. The church is forward-thinking and throughout the year other forms of experimental services may be tried. A talented worship singing group, the Mustard Seeds, has recently been formed, our hope is that they will become our worship band.

**Upkeep of the Building.** Due to a very generous legacy of £740, 000 the church was able to use £90,000 to support a families and youth worker, sadly this has not worked out and the funding has been used up. The rest of the money is supporting a restoration and improvement series of works to the church. The heating, which ceased to work two years ago in 2020, is being totally replaced, and will be finished in Nov. 2022. The nave and tower roof is being replaced in February 2023 and work is planned on the upgrade of the sacristy and making the access user friendly for all people. In addition, there will be a complete re-decoration and we are planning a new" state of the art" sound and vision system. Our vision is to put the church in order as a beacon in the community for mission for the next 50 years, and to care for a Grade 1 listed building, left to us by our forebears. If the building is fit for purpose, it will not be a drain on giving for the real work of mission.

**The Church Hall and Office.** Erected in 1954, it has undergone two improvements, since it was built. We plan to build a new kitchen to the right-hand side of the hall and on the left a new parish office. The present office is far too small, in a building belonging to the United Reformed Church, in Salisbury Street, in the town. Planning permission is being sought for a new office attached to the hall. The hall supports a number of activities; its use is growing after Covid. We want to make this building a parish centre, to become a centre piece in our community mission to the town.



**St. Aldhelm's Sandleheath.** The united Methodist and CofE congregation use the Methodist church. That made St. Aldhelm's Mission Church redundant. Our clergy take a main morning service, usually Holy Communion, at the Methodist Church on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday. The building has been converted into a very well-equipped Village Hall, leased to the Village Hall Trustees for 25 years at a peppercorn rent. Grants were obtained and £75,000 was spent on the building. The church has a right to six free days of use should we wish. The building reverts to us after 25 years.

**St. Giles Chapel of Ease.** Built at around the same time as St. Aldhelm's, by the Hulse family, patrons of Breamore. The numbers attending had fallen to single figures, so the congregation and village decided two years ago to cease worship there. A group was formed to turn the Chapel into a Hermitage, with a view to it being a special place, for small meetings, retreats, and quiet days. The Local Church Council is now in the process of helping them to do this, allowing them to use the building at a peppercorn rental of £1.00 per annum. There is no running water or toilet there, but by doing this, the new group will be able to obtain grants, this would be difficult for the church.

## THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ASCENSION, HYDE

This was known as "the church that broke away". Hyde District was originally part of Fordingbridge but became the independent Parish of Hyde in October 1855. The Rev. Warren, who had been instrumental in fund-raising for the new church, became the first incumbent and remained so for 30 years. There have been various styles of worship over the years, but today we seek to make our services accessible for worshippers of all traditions and of none and for people at various stages in their faith. We enjoy bible-based teaching and have two CW communion services a month, after one of which we have a study time and a Bring and Share lunch. Once a month we have an informal morning service, often lay-led; once a month we have a BCP parish communion at 8.15am, and on this Sunday our main service is at 4 p.m. (the Four O'Clock Slot) this, also, is often lay-led and is followed by or includes tea. The idea is to include families and the Christingle and Harvest services are well-attended by children and families; it has proved more difficult to attract them to other services.



Steel Band (The Purple Parrots) plays hymns and songs on Hyde Common.

There is strong lay involvement in our services and in all aspects of our church life. Apart from the Sunday services we have a monthly Messy Church, a monthly Mothers' Union, a bi-monthly men's group, three home groups which each meet fortnightly (these are currently becoming a part of parish-wide home groups) and a monthly prayer meeting. We also lead a monthly "Lord's Supper" in Frogham chapel. We have two services a year, which are not in the church and look to involve the wider community – one is the Tent Service, which follows Frogham Fair and one is a "Songs of Praise" in the Village Hall; we have also introduced a "Carols on the Common" event before Christmas and the annual Palm Sunday service begins with a procession over the common complete with donkeys and children in appropriate dress. We have a group who regularly go to the school to lead "Open the Book" assemblies and others, clergy and lay, who take assemblies weekly. We have a group of lay people and lay pastors, who regularly visit the housebound and offer communion if that is desired.

We have a team of people who produce the "Link Magazine". It is produced by the church, but it is a community magazine and carries articles and information about the community as well as the church and the chapel. It is distributed by a team of volunteers to about 200 households.



Hyde Church Centre in use

The church has a Church Centre, which was opened in 2015 after fund-raising in the community and the church. It has two halls downstairs and an upstairs space which can be used separately; it is used regularly by a pre-school, Brownies, the Parish Council, a sewing group (Sew Friendly) and, of course, for regular and occasional church activities. The Centre enables us to hold some informal services in it and also to use it for meals or coffee after services.

The hamlets which comprise the Civil Parish of Hyde are still a real community, having many activities which bring the inhabitants together. These include the annual "Frogham Fair" (followed by the Tent Service on the Sunday), the Christmas Fair and the Spring Plant Sale both run by the church, Link lunches for the elderly run in the Village Hall with many volunteers from the church, the annual Produce Show, regular films and other entertainment in the Village Hall. During Covid, we had a joint committee with the various community groups in order to serve the whole community and to make sure that anyone who needed shopping, medication, or help had their needs met. We are delighted that the cooperation worked so well and are hoping to continue to work together.

## ST MARY'S CHURCH, BREAMORE

Saint Mary's is one of the most significant churches of Saxon origin in southern England. It stands in a lovely churchyard, which in the spring, is covered in Snowdrops. The churchyard contains the Hulse family vault and also an ancient yew tree, which still thrives despite its hollow trunk. The churchyard is open for burials today and requires regular maintenance to keep it neat and tidy, mainly by volunteers from the congregation.

The interior of the church is simply and traditionally set out and consists of a chancel and nave separated by a crossing under the square central tower. The Book of Common Prayer is especially valued. Our services include an early morning Holy Communion service celebrated at the east end using seating under the tower, which is also sometimes used for small funerals, or weddings. All other services use the seating in the nave. Each month at our more contemporary Morning Service, the LCC attempt to arrange a different type of service, such as the Snowdrop Service, Harvest Festival, All Souls' Service, and a traditional Remembrance Day Service. Breamore Church is also a very popular venue for weddings, and many of the couples whilst planning their weddings do come to services, and we are hoping to devise a way to keep in touch with them after the wedding.



Yew tree at Breamore



Looking up the nave at Breamore Church

We also hold events to draw in the wider community at Breamore, such as social afternoon tea-parties in the spring, and autumn, and after the Harvest Service, a Harvest Lunch. The Carol Service in December is usually followed by 'drinks and nibbles', hospitality for which Breamore has become renowned within the community.

Within the village is a Church of England Primary school, where the staff team visit most weeks for assemblies. It is our aim to extend this link to invite families to a special themed service, possibly once each half term at a time to suit them.

We are always refining our Pastoral Care, which includes visits to those who are housebound from our congregation offering Home Communion, and we have a small but dedicated team who do this. A flourishing group within the Church is the bell ringers, who meet weekly for practice and ring for some services.

St Mary's Breamore has a dedicated and enthusiastic LCC, and has been fortunate enough to be left some restricted Trust Funds. These have enabled a restricted Fabric fund, currently standing at £20k, to help us care for this remarkable building and fulfil our mission still summarised by the ancient Saxon inscription, "Here is manifested the Word to thee".

## ST MARY'S CHURCH, HALE AND ST BONIFACE CHURCH, WOODGREEN



Family activities on the Avon Valley Path outside Hale Church

- We are at the heart of our two rural communities
- A Christian presence aspiring to follow our Parish vision of loving, serving and connecting
- Both churches are open daily to all people for prayer and reflection offering quiet, sacred spaces and a prayer group is held at St Boniface Church, Woodgreen, once a month
- Plans are in hand for faith and film events to enable theological discussion and reflection
- Our congregation is diverse, and open to a wide range of worship. We are a eucharistic community which celebrates Café Church, Iona, Franciscan and Taizé worship in addition to Common Worship.



Palm Sunday procession from Hale to Woodgreen

- Hospitality is a key feature of our two churches especially during the summer months, when we meet pilgrims on the Avon Valley Pathway and the Hampshire Open Studios Event
- Harvest on the Farm with local beers, cheeses and ciders; part of our ministry to nurture and help sustain local businesses
- We believe in a social justice Gospel and in the integrity of creation, which is our rationale for being Bronze ECO churches, Trussell Trust supporters and serving and selling Fairtrade produce in our churches, at monthly coffee mornings, and at the local farmers' market
- Our Pastoral Visitors offer a listening ear and support across our communities
- We work with the Community Hale & Woodgreen magazine to engage with our community.
- During the Covid lockdowns, as part of the village initiative to support local people, we set up 'care rings' to help people to stay connected with one another. We made weekly phone calls to check in on people's well-being and offered support. This was vital in our local rural community.
- We were at the heart of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in the village of Woodgreen, with a flower festival in the church, beer & hymns at the local pub and a village picnic, music sponsored by the church, on the common.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVAL WORSHIP include

- Beer & Hymns and Christmas Carols in the Local Pub
- Community Steam Show Service
- Advent Posada, Christmas Tree Festival, involving local community organisations such as the W.I., British Legion, and Brownies
- Pop-Up cafés
- Classical music concerts at St Mary's Hale

The atmosphere and simplicity of worship at St Boniface is very special. It feels like home.



Woodgreen Community Steam Fair Service outside

St Boniface

Above all we believe that following Jesus is living life abundantly, creating a friendly atmosphere in joyful thanks to God.

## Baptisms, weddings and funerals in the parish - 2021

	Breamore	Fordingbridge	Hyde	Hale	Woodgreen
Weddings	4	4	2	2	
Blessing	1			1	
Baptisms	2	8	2	1	
Funerals (including burial of ashes)	6	22	14	1	3

## The wider team

Permission to preach (BPP)	Julian Sims
Lay worship leaders (BCM)	Heather Clark, Michele Gosling, Julie Francis, Jeremy Houghton-Brown, Martin Ings, Mike Ireland, Alex Sains, Julian Sims, Peter Worthington
Lay Pastors (BCM)	Pat Bloomfield, Sheilah Collis, Justin Dixon, Julie Francis, Martin Ings, Mary Melbourne
Prayer Champions (BCM)	Sheilah Collis, Mary Melbourne, Marrienne Tomkies
Creation Care (BCM)	Bethan Davies
Safeguarding	Sarah Newman
Children's work	Michele Gosling, Irene Canton, Janet Newman, Carol Sims Open the Book – team coordinated by Roland Butcher Hyde Messy Church team: coordinator – Heather Clark
Music	Fordingbridge: Directors of Music – Tim Ruffer and Hazel Ricketts. Captain of Bell Tower – Keith Halstead Hyde: Organists – Sue and Clive Watkiss. Choir – Marrienne Tomkies Breamore: Organists – William Alexander, Hannah Martin and Mary Melbourne. Captain of Bell Tower – Gordon Dymott
PCC secretary	Shared between Ian Newman and Nigel Spratt
LCC secretaries	Fordingbridge: Judith Dowsett, Hyde: Carrie Darke, Breamore: Mary Melbourne, Hale & Woodgreen: Lynda Warne
Chair of finance committee	Julian Sims
LCC treasurers	Fordingbridge: Martin Calver, Hyde: Anne Edwards, Breamore: Andy Finch, Hale & Woodgreen: Jeff Butt
Fairtrade	Fordingbridge: Rhoda Coates, Hyde: Jenny and Martin Rice, Hale & Woodgreen: Beverly Judd, Sandleheath: Sue Ledger
Vergers	Fordingbridge: Ian Newman, Hyde: Jeremy Houghton-Brown and Glynis Herridge, Breamore: Andy Finch, Hale & Woodgreen: Lynda Warne
Mothers' Union	Jan Houghton-Brown (Chair) and Sheilah Collis and Marrienne Tomkies (secretaries)
Men's Group	John Lyon

Many other activities are carried out by local teams of volunteers.

## Current service pattern

Sunday	Breamore	Fordingbridge	Hyde	Hale & Woodgreen		Sandleheath
<b>Week 1</b>						
8.15am		BCP Communion				
10.00am	Morning Service	“Allsorts” service for all the family	CW Communion	CW Communion		Methodist
6.00pm		The Six O’Clock service – or at Hyde				
<b>Week 2</b>						
8.15am			BCP Communion			
10.00am	BCP Communion	Sung Communion			Morning Service	Methodist
4.00pm			Four O’Clock Slot with tea			
<b>Week 3*</b>						
8.15am		BCP Communion				
10.00am	Matins (BCP)	Morning Service	Informal morning service	Morning Service		C.E Communion
<b>Week 4</b>						
8.15am	BCP Communion					
10.00am		Sung Communion	CW Communion followed by study and Bring & Share lunch		CW Communion	Methodist
6.00pm		Sung Evensong				
<b>Week 5</b>						
10.00am	Generally, a whole parish service in one church, perhaps including Sandleheath.					

\*In week 3 when there is nothing allocated in the evening, uses have included a fellowship walk and discussion group.

### Wednesdays at 10.00am

Week 1: BCP Communion at Fordingbridge

Week 2: Prayer meeting led by Hyde at Frogham Chapel

Week 3: BCP Communion at Fordingbridge

Week 4: Informal “Iona style” communion led by Hyde at Frogham Chapel

## Facts and figures

### Accounts 2021

	Breamore	Fordingbridge	Hale & Woodgreen	Hyde	Combined *
<i>Worshipping Community (for 2022)</i>	23	156	25	58	262
<b>Income</b>					
General	21,735	143,860	31,627	59,025	256,247
<i>(of which regular giving)</i>					
Legacies	2,400	5,000	-	-	7,400
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Parish Share	(12,214)	(79,470)	(14,128)	(31,100)	(136,912)
Other Costs	(11,067)	(71,948)	(11,152)	(23,669)	(117,836)
AVCM Grant	-	(35,560)	-	-	(35,560)
Adjustments and Invt Gains	770	(4,469)	1,132	1,736	(831)
Timing shortfall on Share	-	24	(5,517)	(1,578)	(7,119)
<b>Net Surplus / Deficit</b>	1,624	(42,563)	1,962	4,414	(34,563)
<b>Balances</b>					
General & Designated Funds	16,687	581,128	15,250	48,438	661,503
Endowment & Restricted Funds	126,894	7,973	11,259	23,778	169,904

- This is a simple addition of the four parts of the parish and does not properly adjust for transfers between separate accounts. The amounts involved are not significant.
- Adjustments include office cost allocations and overpayments during year
- Fordingbridge made a one-off grant to AVCM in the year
- Given changes to the Parish at 31 December Hyde and Hale & Woodgreen were behind with payments of share subsequently paid in full
- A significant element of Fordingbridge's designated Fund balance is committed to works required to the church building



### **Charity Number 1180169**

The charity Avon Valley Community Matters was set up in 2018. Its constitution states that the incumbent of Avon Valley Churches shall be the chair of the charity. The web site can be found here. <https://www.avonvalleychurches.org.uk/avcmatters>

The key purpose of the charity was to employ a Youth Children and Families worker, which was initially funded for 3 years by Fordingbridge PCC for the amount of £90,000. The charity was successful in employing a part time person for this position and this has resulted in the funding lasting 5 years. The outreach work for the Youth Children and Families Worker was to target families who did not attend church. This was achieved by running Holiday at Home projects during the school holidays. The charity also supports a playgroup in Hale called Little Acorns.

Another key activity is supporting those who are bereaved and lonely. This is done in the following ways:

- Holding a twice a month coffee morning held in one of the local pubs which offers friendship and companionship. Over 50 people are registered on this group.
- Outings such as bus trip, garden visits, and theatre trips are organised.
- Working with the GP surgery and the schools, professional counselling is offered to bereaved adults and children. The AVCM has five trained counsellors supporting this service.
- A befriending service is offered to those who are lonely.

Future plans are very exciting. Key projects for the future are:

- To open a Charity Shop in Fordingbridge High Street to provide sustainable income.
- To develop further the Superstars Playgroup for toddlers and families with special educational needs.
- To expand the bereavement services by starting a Miscarriage Support group.