

The Beacon Parishes Mission Community

Profile and Vision Document

PROFILE

The Beacon Parishes Mission Community was formed in June 2014 when the parish of Broadhempston joined the existing parishes of Ipplepen with Torbryan, Denbury and Woodland. The name was chosen as it exemplified the diversity of churches and communities, the rural nature of the area, the Christian witness and the beacon that we hope to be in the area as we reflect Christ's light to our neighbours. A logo was designed to reflect these qualities.

The four Churches in the Mission Community have each got their own distinct tradition. We believe that the different traditions give 'colour and texture' to the church and rejoice in our differences rather than regret them. All four churches have learnt much from each other and experienced the challenges of joint services and sharing of resources. We come together as a mission community at various times such as Lent courses, united services, patronal festivals, messy church.....etc. and the wardens meet regularly to forge closer links. We are very positive about the relationships that we have forged between the parishes.

As well as working more closely together the parishes are working towards a Mission Community Pastoral Care Team and Ipplepen and Denbury have Baptism Ministry Teams to help in the preparation of families for their important occasion.

THE PARISHES

Ipplepen

Ipplepen is a large rural parish, which together with the hamlets of Torbryan, Dainton, and Combefishacre, has a population of approximately 2700 with about 2100 aged over 19.

Originally a farming community, Ipplepen is still a "working village", and has grown significantly over the last 50 years. Most houses are privately owned, but there is a small amount of social housing [6%]. Ipplepen is a popular and thriving village with good facilities, a good mix of ages, many social groups and a tangible sense of community and goodwill. New residents are made to feel welcome and cared for and are encouraged to join in village activities.

St Andrew's Church is highly visible at the centre of the village and for many miles around, especially at night when the tower is floodlit [by voluntary donations. It is a

large building mostly dating from about 1450, and the large number of clear glass windows give it a "light and airy" feeling during the day. It holds up to 240 people. The building is in good condition for its age.

There is a modernised Church Hall adjacent to St Andrew's, regularly hired by village organisations and used by the church for social and fund raising activities. The kitchen was recently refurbished to a high standard. The parish office is also based in the church hall. Solar panels were installed in 2011 to take benefit of "feed in tariff" income.

Ipplepen also has a Methodist church, and St Andrew's has close links with their members and with Roman Catholic residents in the village.

The Church is also fortunate in having generous support from many volunteers over a wide range of activities including: a strong hospitality group catering for lunches and coffee mornings; help at Messy Church; cleaners; flower arrangers; choir; bell ringers; drivers to church; vestry carers; servers; chalice administrators; fabric working party; a small team involved in working tapestry for the church; and many others.

The Churches in Ipplepen organise a monthly Lunch Club in the Church Hall, mainly for "those who dine alone", but including some couples who are lonely or who need extra support. It is financially self-supporting.

Holy Trinity, Torbryan

Holy Trinity, Torbryan is owned and managed by the Churches Conservation Trust with which we have a good working relationship.

The approach to this church, through typical narrow Devon lanes to an isolated and wooded valley, does not prepare you for a building of such size and grandeur. The church is a perfect example of the Gothic Perpendicular style and was unusually constructed in one 20-year building campaign between 1450 and 1470. The superb, soaring tower rises in three stages, and has an octagonal stair turret which forms a dramatic architectural feature. As you enter look up at the exquisite and rare fan-vaulted ceiling with four small angels supporting the central ribs of each fan. Inside there is a beautifully carved altar screen that spans the width of the church, dividing the interior with its graceful arches. Below the screen are painted panels of 40 saints – they were once whitewashed, perhaps to save them from the puritanical zeal of the Reformation. The delicacy of the wood carving is echoed by the elegant tracery of the windows, many of which contain Medieval stained glass. Parts of the original rood-screen were reused probably in the early 19th-century, to form the pulpit, while at the same time the original pulpit was reconstructed as the altar. The 15th-century oak benches survive but were enclosed in the 18th-century to form box pews.

Denbury

The ecclesiastical parish of Denbury is a small rural parish of about 300 homes and a population of approximately 600 including the outlying farms. As well as the Church, the village also benefits from a small store/sub post office, village hall and public house, the Union Inn, which is situated at the southern edge of the village facing onto the village green. The village has an excellent Primary School which has a rising roll of 120 children.

The community is reasonably well balanced, with young families, those of middle-age and retired people. The Office for National Statistics publishes Local Government Parish information, which in the case of Denbury includes Torbryan and currently shows: 156 children up to age 15 years; 244 persons between 16 and 44 years of age; 248 persons between 45 and 64 years of age; and 193 persons above 65 years of age. Of the total 47% are male and 53% female. There is a high proportion of professional people who commute to the main centres of employment in the surrounding towns and cities for work; farming, land based industries, the school and the pub being the exceptions provide for local employment. There is also a nursing home, 'Bramble Down', employing a small staff of local people.

The annual May Fayre, held on the village green, is one of the biggest and best of the local fetes attracting many hundreds of visitors. The church runs an Autumn Fayre each October and the weekly Monday Tea Pot, for all ages, at Church Cottage. Many clubs and social groups use church cottage as their 'home' venue. Once a month a successful new initiative called "Men of Denbury" meet to socialise in the Cottage.

In recent history the church was a sole parish until 1981, when it became a united benefice with Ogwell. Deanery reorganisation in 2001 led to Ogwell joining Newton Abbot and, Denbury joining the Parish of Ipplepen with Torbryan to form a United Benefice. We were later joined by the Parish of Woodland in 2008 and Broadhempston in 2014, forming the new Beacon Parishes Mission Community.

The present building was consecrated in 1318 by Bishop Stapleden of Exeter. It is a small medieval building and has probably not altered much in appearance since but, work on the East wall about 12 years ago revealed earlier Anglo Saxon foundations. The building, unlike most Devon churches, is cruciform in shape with north and south transepts, nave and chancel a single centre aisle and no side aisle. There is a tower at the west end with a gallery now housing an organ. The nave is fully pewed and with some additional seating can accommodate about 120 people.

A partnership between the School and the Church resulted in the extension and refurbishment of a small cottage in 2007. The cottage is used after services for coffee and, social events, meetings, Thursday prayers and quiet days are features of its regular use. It is also available for hire to various village groups and is self-funding. On the walls Local artists exhibit their work for sale to the benefit of the church which receives up to

20% on all sales. 'Monday T Pot' is held there weekly. It is popular with a small but loyal group of parishioners and recently other churches in the area have sought its use for 'away days'.

There are 5 bells in the tower and a keen group of experienced and under training ringers keep them well used. The bells are in need of renovation having been in situ and un-touched since 1906.

Broadhempston

Broadhempston is an ancient village, existing as a Neolithic hill settlement before St. Petroc founded the first church in the 520s. The second church was built in 900 AD and was rededicated to remove the Saxon Celtic name and become St. Peter and St. Paul. It consists of a tower at the west end with six bells rung from ground floor level. The nave has a simple Norman font, a vestry and porch being added in the 1890s by Harry Hems who also restored the impressive mediaeval rood screen.

The weekly congregation has a core of 12 people with others adding to the number, especially on special occasions. Over 130 came to the inaugural patronal festival! As with many rural congregations there is a bias to people of an older age but younger families join in and we have an excellent relationship with the local ("outstanding") primary school. In 2014 nine members of the congregation were confirmed having started their church journey in Sunday School a long time ago!

The village consists of a central grouping of houses etc. and a more scattered rural part along the lanes. At its centre the village has the church, a community shop and post office, a village hall (with a monthly lunch club and many community activities) and two public houses.

Woodland

Woodland is a long narrow rural hamlet situated about three miles off the A38 Expressway. The parish is roughly in the centre of a triangle between the town of Ashburton and the villages of Broadhempston and Denbury. There are no shops or schools but there is a public house, The Rising Sun. The total population is approximately 150, of which a third are involved in agriculture and the rest are either working from home, retired or commute to work. However, there is a small factory on the border of the parish manufacturing medical parts.

The Church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, was built in 1530 and is in good repair. A Parish Room, owned by the parish, is situated nearby and available for use by the church. The average congregation size is twelve. The Mission Community Advent candlelight carol service and a Christmas carol service are regular events at St John's

and are normally well attended, together with the traditional Easter and Harvest services and the patronal festival.

Although a very small parish, there is a youth club and a Parish Hall Social Committee. A summer fete is held every two years and a harvest supper every year, the proceeds of which are divided equally between the Parish Room and Church. A monthly Library is held on a Saturday and mixes books with fellowship over coffee.

The average age of the regular congregation is about 70 years. Families with children attend on special occasions in the church calendar such as Easter, but not regularly.

TOWARDS A VISION

Members from each parish got together between September 2014 and January 2015 (with a review in May 2016) to revisit the Vision for the Mission Community over the next 5 years.

The Vision of the JAM Mission Community celebrated in 2011 had been:

- We will work together to increase our knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ through Prayer, reading the Bible and other Spiritual works.
- We will offer Christian Hospitality to all so that we have opportunities to get to know each other and in practical ways show that we are followers of Jesus Christ. By our example we may assist regular members and visitors to have a greater understanding and belief in the message of Christ.
- We will reach out to all identified groups in our Mission Community through our religious and social gatherings. Our groups include: children, young people and their families, single adults, the elderly, the bereaved and villagers including other denominations.

The new group discussed what was special about their churches, what they were good at and what they enjoyed doing, and what they felt was the essential nature of "church" in their different places. They discussed the priorities for mission communities set out in the document "Towards a Diocesan Mission Action Plan". Finally they looked at their own priorities for the future before distilling a final list of areas which form the Vision for the Mission Community. From this 'plan for the future' will grow a Mission Action Plan as we seek to find out what God is doing in the Mission Community and as we seek to join in.

Bishop Robert, Bishop of Exeter, has indicated his priorities for his ministry as:

- Growing in prayer
- Making new disciples
- Serving the people of Devon with joy

We hope to engage fully in his vision.

The Vision headings, in no particular priority order, are:

† SPIRITUALITY

- worship
- prayer
- quiet days

† DISCIPLESHIP

- education incl. Lent course and occasional discussion groups
- vocations incl. building on baptism ministry, funeral ministry, lay involvement in services, serving, Eucharistic ministry

† SOCIAL

- hospitality
- being a mission community
- supporting each other's patronal festivals

† PASTORAL

- pastoral care
- home communion
- welcome
- personnel, including succession planning

† OUTREACH (being part of and serving the community)

- mission
- hospitality
- stewardship and giving of money, time and talents
- communication
- Baptism, Funeral and Wedding ministry

† CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS

- Schools
- Messy Church
- Sunday Club
- Baptism and Confirmation
- Safeguarding (incl. Vulnerable Adults)

† FABRIC

- buildings
- property
- churchyards
- comfort