



Bruton Summertime

On 5 July, Deanery Synod discussed and approved a proposal for the re-organisation of the grouping of parishes into Benefices across our Deanery. Under this proposal, our Benefice would be enlarged by the addition of a single parish: Bratton Seymour. This is a smaller enlargement than would have been the case under some of the other proposals that were

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under consideration. For those who were and are uneasy at the prospect of the Benefice becoming larger, this is therefore a welcome development.

However, things may not be quite as simple as they appear. It is likely that the formula used to calculate each parish's contribution to the Common Fund (i.e. each parish's 'Parish Share') will be changed in the not-too-distant future. This has already been floated at Diocesan Synod, although no firm proposals have yet been advanced. If this change is progressed, it is likely that the substance of the change would be to move away from a formula based on the number of people in the congregation and instead use a formula based on the amount of stipendiary ministry provided by our Diocese to each Benefice. It is very likely that there will still be an adjustment based on socio-economic factors, with parishes in more deprived areas being asked to pay a reduced amount. That reduction will not apply to any of our parishes – we are relatively affluent compared with some in other parts of the Diocese. The basis of the new formula is likely to be that each Benefice pays an amount that corresponds to the amount of stipendiary ministry it receives. In our Benefice, we have 1 stipendiary priest. So it is likely that our combined parish share for the Benefice will be set at an amount that reflects the cost to the Diocese of providing that ministry, irrespective of how many parishes there are in the Benefice and irrespective of how large or small the congregations. If this is what happens, we would see a large increase in our aggregate parish share.

Under the current re-organisation plans, other Benefices in the Deanery are being enlarged much more than ours – we would be the

smallest Benefice in the Deanery. As noted above, in some ways, this would be welcome, but it would have the further consequence that there would be fewer parishes and fewer regular worshippers in our Benefice to help pay our contribution to the Common Fund (i.e. our combined parish share). Most of the other Benefices in the Deanery would probably be set the same parish share as us, because they also have 1 stipendiary priest) even though they are bigger.

We need to be aware of this and plan accordingly.

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If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, do please send it to the Rector at the benefice office address.

Easy-to-follow details of how to receive this newsletter by email can be found on the St Mary's website, or email benefice@stmarysbruton.org. If you are aware of someone who might like to receive it but does not use email, please consider printing a copy yourself and delivering it to them.

News from our Parishes

Please remember to make donations to the Brue Larder (our local foodbank), if you are able to do so. The Larder is very short of supplies and is having to buy food to distribute. Please think of this when attending a service at church and bring a donation if you can (whoever takes the service will be happy to collect any donations). There is a donation point in the corner at the back of St Mary's.

On 27 June, St John's hosted a meeting of the 'Wilder Churches' group. This is not about avant-garde liturgy, but biodiversity. A group of people from numerous parishes around Somerset gathered for a bit of botany and then they conducted a survey of both the wilder area and the more maintained area of the churchyard. If any other parish is interested in developing a 'wilder' area within their churchyard, have a look at the Somerset Wildlife Trust's web pages:

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/events/wilder-churches>

If anyone would like to know more, there will be an online meeting on 5 September at 7.00pm, which anyone is welcome to attend: Wilder Churches:

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/events/2023-09-05-wilder-churches-online-get-together>

On 26 June, St Mary's hosted a wonderful concert given by the Aurin Girls' Choir from Hungary as the first stop on their tour. It was a great joy to be able to hear this remarkable choir sing.

St Mary's has received a faculty for the introduction of a new nave altar and some new altar frontals, so the project to make these altar frontals, together with matching vestments and lectern drops, is now underway. If you, or anyone you know, would like to be part of the team making them, please contact either the Benefice Office or Clare Mills.



Benefice Discussion Group

The series of discussions about the parables is nearing its end – we will have a break during August and then resume a new series of discussions in September. Details to be advised nearer the time. One possibility is to have a closer look at the Bible: what sort of a book it is, where it came from and who wrote it, what it means to say that it is authoritative for Christians, how we read it and apply it to our lives. If this is of interest to you, please contact the Rector. An alternative (or addition) might be to discuss a recently published book called 'Questioning God', by Timothy Radcliffe and Lukasz Popko.

Visit to the Society of Friends

On Sunday 30 July, it being a 5th Sunday in the month, there will be no mid-morning services in the Benefice. Instead, there will be a visit to join with the Friends (aka the Quakers) at their regular meeting at the Friends' Meeting House in Wincanton. All are welcome.

The Clerk explains what happens as follows:

'Our Meetings are somewhat different from the Anglican Church. What normally surprises visitors is that we have no leader at the Meeting. We are all equally responsible, we hope to be led by the Holy Spirit. We meet in silence together and if anyone feels called to speak then they will stand and "minister". It is expected that there will always be a reasonable space between ministries. It is not a debate and a theme may or may not develop. Ministry

is expected to be reasonably short, and sometimes there may be no ministry at all during the hour.'

The meeting starts at 10.30 am. If you would like to go, please let us know via the Benefice Office so we can give them a feel for likely numbers. If you would like transport, please let us know that too.

Arts Events

St Peter's, Redlynch hosted an exhibition of paintings, etchings and drawings by William Richards. The show was entitled 'Tongues on Men and Angels' and ran on 14-15 July.

We are hoping that there will be a recital by 'Alivira', also at Redlynch, on a date in September, tbc, and also a concert at St Mary's by a well-known folk singer on 21 September, again tbc.

Film Night: the series of regular film nights continues at St Peter's, Shepton Montague with a showing of the Whale on Thursday 10 August (7.30pm start).

Wyke Champflower Coffee Morning

There will be a coffee morning at the Manor House, Wyke Champflower, by kind invitation of Mrs Elizabeth Winkley, on Saturday 5 August from 10.00am. This is to raise funds to support Holy Trinity, Wyke Champflower – please do come and support this event.

Harvest Festivals

Our harvest festivals this year will be held on the following dates:

- St John's, Brewham: 3 September, 11.00 am
- St Leonard's, Pitcombe: 17 September, 11.00 am
- St Mary's, Bruton: 17 September, 11.00 am
- Holy Trinity, Wyke Champflower: 17 September, 6.30 pm
- St Peter's, Shepton Montague: 24 September, 6.00 pm
- St Peter's, Redlynch: 29 September, 11.00 am

Diary Dates

- 5 August: Wyke Champflower coffee morning
- 10 August: Film Night at Shepton Montague, 6.45pm for 7.30 pm start
- 26 August: Shepton Montague fete

Further ahead:

- 8 September: Pitcombe PCC meeting
- 11 September: Brewham PCC meeting
- 13 September: Bruton PCC meeting
- 19 September: Shepton Montague PCC meeting
- 16 September: harvest celebration at the Bruton Club, details tbc

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