

THE PARISH OF ST PETER, HARGRAVE (0510)

In the DIOCESE of CHESTER, MALPAS DEANERY

PARISH PROFILE



24th February 2021

CONTENTS

Introduction

A popular place to live

Church and associated buildings

Church worship

Huxley Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Church and village activities

Finance

Forward planning

The incumbent

This Parish Profile was prepared by members of Hargrave Parochial Church Council and approved by members of the whole PCC.

Introduction

The Parish of Hargrave, including Huxley, lies about 7 miles south east of Chester, between the roads to Whitchurch (A41) and Nantwich (A51). It is predominantly farmland on the Cheshire plain, overlooked by the Peckforton Hills and also by the castles of Beeston and Peckforton. The river Gowy ambles through the parish eventually feeding the River Mersey and flowing out into the Irish sea between Liverpool and New Brighton. The Parish (0510) forms part of the Malpas Deanery in the Diocese of Chester and is one of 20 Parishes in that Deanery.

A Popular, attractive and vibrant place to live.

Having been predominantly a farming community for most of its history, the Parish is now attracting residents who mostly travel to work. However several farms still remain, making in total, about 140 dwellings, and a population of less than 500 of all ages.

There is a Village Hall in Huxley and, unusually, a new public house called 'The Inn at Huxley'. Hargrave has the benefit of the Church Hall which also doubles up as a Village Hall. The Parish Church is St. Peter's at Hargrave.

We have the benefit of an excellent butcher's shop and Deli at 'The Inn at Huxley.' There are other shops within a short driving distance at Tattenhall and Tarporley, both of which are lovely Cheshire villages. The local High Schools are all judged at least 'good' by Ofsted. There is one at Tarporley and one in Malpas and a Church of England Aided High School on the way to Chester, about six miles away. The local services include a bus route to Chester and numerous cycle and walking tracks exploring this part of Cheshire. It is well worth a visit.

There is a 'Glamping' campsite in Huxley which is very popular during the season, and makes an ideal place for visitors and holiday-makers to stay and explore the area. We also have the famous Shropshire Union Canal running through the parish on its way from Chester to Wolverhampton – around 66 miles of beautiful linear countryside to walk and cycle.



Church and associated buildings at St Peter's, Hargrave.

The picture shows St Peter's Church with the Vicarage in the background.

The Parish Church is a well-cared for and welcoming building. By the entrance door there is a visitors' book which contains comments made by the many visitors who arrive here. It's well worth reminding ourselves what people's first impression of our church is.



The Parish Church is dedicated to St. Peter and was built in the year 1627. It was founded by Sir Thomas Moulson who, as a boy, had lived locally but had to walk each day to the village of Tarvin where the nearest school was then located. As an adult Thomas moved to London becoming a member of the Hanseatic League of merchants and in 1638 was made Lord Mayor



of London. As a result of his success as a merchant and remembering his childhood home, he was able to make endowments of land and money that permitted the construction of the Church, and which initially doubled up as the School. Church records commence in 1631. The Moulson Trust exists to this day to administer the endowment and provides an annual income to the Church, its related activities and to young people who live in the parish towards their education. Present trustees include the Venerable Michael Gilbertson, Archdeacon of Chester and the incumbent.

The Church is a simple and attractive building of sandstone-constructed walls and handmade roof tiles. In 1888 the East window was blocked in and a beautiful carved oak Reredos was erected behind the altar — the cost of this work was paid for by the then Duke of Westminster. The fitted pews are of stained pine, but recently two were removed to make a cosy child friendly area for children and grandchildren.

The stone font is octagonal and believed to be contemporary with the original building. Inspections have regularly taken place and various remedial works undertaken to keep the Church in good order. A good sound system was installed in 2010 and this has made a great difference to our ability to hear younger readers and to play music as part of the services.

The graveyard surrounding the church was extended to include the new churchyard across the lane leading up to the Church Hall in the 1920's and since then burials have largely taken place in the new graveyard. The "old" graveyard, nevertheless, is closed but does remain open for ashes following cremation.

Church Hall, Hargrave

The Church Hall adjoining St Peter doubles up as the Village Hall and was originally the Village Primary School. It closed in 1954 and the children transferred to Huxley, again cementing the ties between both villages. The old School building suffered from primitive facilities but when the Moulson Trust became reactivated with local Trustees some years ago, it was agreed that substantial improvements would be undertaken, funded both by the Trust and Church resources with significant grants. The building was then rented by Hargrave PCC from the Trust and became the Church Hall and is run by a committee under the auspices of the PCC.



A major restoration of the Hall was undertaken in 2005/06 and further works on building a new kitchen and store followed. We now have excellent, up-to-date facilities in the Hall, enabling the building to be used for wedding etc. Many Villagers give freely of their time to help maintain the Church Hall in good order and many church-related fundraising events occur in the Hall, as well as many organised by other organisations. It now stands as a symbol of the Christian fellowship that exists in Hargrave and Huxley.

The church hall beautifully decorated for a recent wedding.



THE VICARAGE HARGRAVE

The vicarage is a spacious and attractive building on a beautiful expansive site. It would be an ideal family home with plenty of garden space and great views over the local Cheshire farmland.

The late Victorian building was owned by the Moulson Trust until 1981 when it was given to the Diocesan Parsonages Board. A considerable amount of fundraising within the villages, and in conjunction with the PCC, ensured essential improvements were undertaken to the House before it was handed over. This was another example of the dedication of the parishioners of the two villages to ensure the ministry was maintained in the locality. The vicarage is now maintained by the Diocese and is in good condition.



The Vicarage orchard

The vicarage comprises of.....

Downstairs

Large Drawing Room
Snug/tv room
Dining Room
Study/music room
Kitchen
Scullery/Utility Room
Pantry
WC

Upstairs

Main bedroom + ensuite – shower & loo
Bedroom 2
Bedroom 3
Bedroom 4/study
Bathroom with shower, bath, bidet

Outside

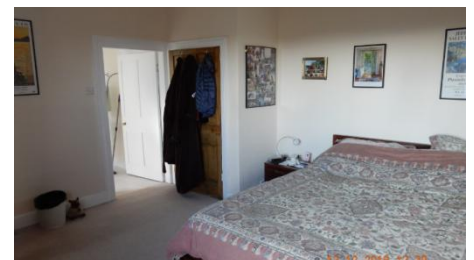
Stable block/garage, 2 outhouses



Drawing room ,



Dining Room,



Main bedroom and ensuite

Vicarage kitchen



Church Worship

We believe that worship and pastoral care are at the centre of our church and we want both to be ingrained in our church community. We welcome visitors of other Christian denominations at all of our services and they are encouraged to take a full role.

The pattern of weekly services is currently as follows;

St Peter's Parish Church

First Sunday	9.45 am Parish Communion (Common Worship)
Second Sunday	9.45 am Parish Communion (Common Worship)
Third Sunday	9.45 am Family Communion
Fourth Sunday	9.45 am Parish Communion (Common Worship)
Fifth Sunday	9.45 am Parish Communion (Common Worship)

Special services are held at Christian Festivals, e.g. a Crib Service, Nine Lessons and Carols and a Midnight Eucharist at Christmas. In addition special services are conducted particularly at Harvest and on Plough Sunday in January (as a recognition of the rural nature of the Parish area). In recent years the special service held on the morning of Remembrance Day has resulted in a very large attendance and it is hoped will be continued. The Happy Days Weekend always includes a special services on the Sunday.

Attendances are generally good and particular (unsolicited) mention is often made by new - comers that they have been very pleased with the lovely welcome they receive.

We have Methodists within our community who have recently lost their own Chapel, and these worshipers are invited to join us whenever they wish. The Salvation Army brass band are also regular visitors to the parish. We also have liaison with St Werburgh's Roman Catholic Church in Chester and Father Paul Shaw is well known to us.



A family friendly area in the Nave

There is a general willingness within the PCC and congregation to be open-minded to new ideas for the pattern and format of services. Recently discussions have been in progress to introduce other more modern types of worship to attract younger families from the parish and further afield. We look forward to this work being continued in the future.

There are formal lists of sidespersons, Bible-readers and persons to undertake intercessions, and the rotas for these are regularly updated. There are a number of parishioners who are servers and help with the distribution of the wine during Holy Communion. Weekly music and hymns are currently chosen by the leader of the choir who also runs an enlarged choir for special occasions – sometimes including children from the school. We like music at St Peter's and have regular visits from the Salvation Army brass band for Carol singing etc. At the moment we have two young organists who play for us weekly.

Historically, here at St Peter's, Hargrave, we have successfully hosted a Sunday School. This has run alongside services and children have taken part in our monthly family service by reading prayers and assisting with taking the collection and bringing the elements to the Altar. However, in recent years our children have grown into young adults and are now looking for a new direction in terms of relevant worship. We are very open to new thinking and have a small but willing group of young adults (aged between 11 and 15) who are keen to get involved in some fresh and different ideas for worship.

Huxley Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

The School is in Huxley and is about 2 miles from St Peter's Church, Hargrave. Historically it has been a successful primary school with a maximum capacity of about 50 pupils drawn from the local area. In recent years, however, changes in the rural population has brought families from further afield, creating a much more diverse catchment.

A small rural school in a small village location is, by its nature, vulnerable to variations of pupil numbers. Recently these numbers have dropped and the Local Authority therefore initiated a public consultation process to consider the school's future.. An action group consisting of four members of the PCC as well as other interested parties and supported by the local community, has managed to ensure that the consultation process, at the time of writing, has been suspended. A largely new Board of Governors is embarking on an exciting project of providing flexi-schooling for children who would otherwise be 100% home educated. Flexi-



schooling applies to children who are registered at a school and where the family have contracted with a school for a child to attend the school for 2 or 3 days a week. There is currently no provision in our Local Authority to provide this. The school's aim is to supplement an increasing number of full time pupils with a significant number of flexi-schooled children.

It is expected that the new incumbent, as ex-officio foundation governor will take an active part in the school, taking weekly assemblies and providing RE support as necessary. In particular he/she should ensure the PCC are kept informed about all relevant issues at the school and actively encourage close links between Church and school, following the guidelines issued by the Chester Diocesan Board of Education.



Church and village activities.

There are many village activities in Hargrave and Huxley and this must be exceptional for a Parish of its size. The Church is the focal point for most activities with Church members either leading or taking an active part in almost all of them.



The pre-school play group has recently closed due to lack of children of a suitable age, and the Youth Club has been closed due to lack of suitable volunteer leaders, but there are hopes that both can soon be restarted.

In 2020, during Covid 19 restrictions there was a village led 'Living Advent Calendar' project. This involved homes from all around the villages creating a beautiful display in front of their premises, for each day of Advent. This was a welcome and enthusiastic start to our Christmas celebrations.

The Parish produces a monthly magazine called 'Down Our Way'. The magazine is printed and distributed around the parish by a team of volunteers.

Huxley and Hargrave Happy Days weekend.

The Happy Days weekend evolved in the mid-eighties from a small garden fete held on a Saturday afternoon to a full weekend's activities. It is still a traditional rural village fete, which has been a successful and important part of village life for over 30 years. The Church field and Hall host the fete and the organisation of it is undertaken by a group of villagers who form a Happy Days Committee with the overall responsibility being the PCC's





FINANCES

The parish is financially viable. Hard work and generous giving in the 2000s put the parish's finances on a firm footing and we currently have a healthy level of reserves. However, we are aware that there are always potential liabilities that might eat into these.

Energetic organisation and running of community and fund raising events has allowed us to support a wide range of local, national and international charities at about £3000 per year. An annual 'Big Breakfast' collection for Christian Aid raises about a further £1500. We are a 'giving' church. We have a foodbank which supports the people of Chester, Ellesmere Port and the surrounding villages. We also support 'Save the Family' – a local charity which provides accommodation and support to vulnerable homeless families.

We collect on a regular basis for UNICEF by selling Christian Advent calendars and Easter Eggs. We also give generously in response to other worldwide problems as they happen and see this as part of our Christian commitment.



Christmas Gift Service for 'Save the Family'

The Moulson Trust continues to provide generous support for parish's work in the community. The level of giving remains steady, and we fully meet the parish's liability for parish share. However, the departure of our vicar will increase our costs during the ensuing vacancy (covering visiting clergy expenses etc.). The commitment of the PCC to securing its financial base in order to remain a viable, independent parish is clearly evident from this brief financial review.

Forward Planning

Forward planning is a continual process and we always have a list of 'to do's'. Most recently these have included revising our Eucharistic service booklets, creating a child and family-friendly area in the nave, putting in new notice and display boards and installing an impressive sound system and microphones.....and making our pews more comfortable too! Our ongoing current project is to replace our organ with a digital model – thus enabling us to improve the music in the church.

THE NEW INCUMBENT

The new incumbent will find an active and committed Church membership who readily see the need for change and progress, and will support this fully. We are seeking someone who:

- will offer wise leadership to inspire this active Church community;
- has the ability to mix tradition and innovation in worship;
- will help the congregation to grow in faith and daily discipleship;
- has a genuine desire to involve and encourage young people and adults within the church community, and to develop the Sunday School;
- will play a full role in the life of Huxley C of E Primary School, including as foundation governor, encouraging links between school and church;
- will see pastoral care and visiting (including those outside the congregation) as an important part of the role, and will work with the congregation to develop lay involvement in this ministry.
- will work to continue and develop the excellent links between the church and other local community organizations, including through village social events.
- will relate well and encouragingly to people in the parish, whether or not they are church members.

Website: www.stpetershargrave.org.uk

Facebook page: @sphargave