

# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, FRENCHAY

## PARISH PROFILE

### Introduction

#### **Parish**

St John the Baptist, Frenchay

#### **Population**

The Parish comprises approximately 1300 households with a total population of about 3000.

#### **Electoral Roll**

There are currently 191 people on the Church Electoral Roll; 92 reside within the Parish and 99 are non-residents.

#### **Deanery**

Kingswood and South Gloucestershire.

### Overview

Frenchay is a semi-rural village on the Bristol/South Gloucestershire fringe, in the Deanery of Kingswood and South Gloucestershire. It was part of the Parish of Winterbourne until 1834 when a new church was built on Frenchay Common as a "Chapel of Ease".

The population includes many who have moved into the area for employment or retirement, with a small core whose families have lived in the area for many generations. Much of the property is relatively expensive which reduces the number of young families in the Parish, although in recent months there has been a welcome increase in the number of younger attenders.

The Parish is adjacent to the M4/M32 junction, also the A4174 ring road. The Bristol Parkway Station is near so that communications with the rest of the country are good.

For some years Frenchay and Winterbourne Down have been a united benefice, the link with Winterbourne Down now being replaced by a partnership with the nearby Parish of Stapleton. Traditionally there has been a close relationship with Stapleton, which has been a Mission Partner together with Downend and Mangotsfield Parishes.

The work arising from the 2000 Quinquennial Survey has been completed. The 2005 Survey has, however, shown an urgent need for major roof repairs and work is actively in hand to obtain contractors and identify funding sources.

### General Description of the Parish

#### **History**

Early records show that Frenchay started as a small, humble settlement on the edge of the Manor and Ecclesiastical Parish of Winterbourne.

The settlement grew considerably in the seventeenth century. This was due principally to its location just outside the five-mile limit of Bristol that meant that non-conformists were encouraged to settle and build many fine houses in the area. The spiritual needs of most of Frenchay's inhabitants were catered for by the Friend's Meeting House and the Unitarian Chapel. The remainder had to make the journey to the Parish Church at Winterbourne, 3 miles away. This proved too much of an inconvenience and there were enough Anglican gentry (led by George Worrall of Frenchay House) to

raise most of the money to build a church on what was common land. The church was built in 1834.

### **Character**

Today, many of the regency buildings remain in the village, but there has also been more modern housing development. Frenchay remains a very popular and desirable place to live. Much of the village is a conservation area and the scope for new building is restricted. This tends to keep property prices high.

The position of the Common in the middle of the village means that there are several distinct residential areas (built in the 50's and 60's) apart from the "old" village established on the hill leading down to the river Frome. In addition to the Common local green areas include Frenchay Moor, a small National Trust open space, and the banks of the Frome Valley.

Some of the large old buildings have become nursing homes where residents receive communion from time to time from the incumbent and licensed helpers.

### **Employment**

The surrounding area has developed considerably in the last 20 years and is now a centre of employment. Key employers include Hewlett Packard, AXA Insurance, MoD Procurement Agency (Abbey Wood), BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, University of the West of England, a large hotel and a business park. Within the Parish the only employer is Frenchay Hospital. This is one of two general hospitals managed by the North Bristol NHS Trust. The Trust is reconfiguring its hospital services and it seems likely that the 500-bed hospital will be downgraded to a small community hospital.

### **Education**

There is a small (120 pupils) Church VC Primary school adjacent to the church that serves Frenchay and part of the surrounding area. The Priest-in-Charge is an ex-officio governor; the governing body also includes two foundation Governors from the congregation.

For secondary education children have to travel outside the Parish with the nearest state school being in Winterbourne. Just outside the Parish, 1 ½ miles from the church lies the University of the West of England with some 16,000 students. New halls of residence mean an additional 2000 student places will soon be available.

### **The New Priest**

The qualities looked for in a new priest are,

- Spiritual Leadership - to build on the changes instigated by the last incumbent and the furtherance of God's work through a strong shared faith.
- Frenchay is "middle of the road" but open to a priest who will exhibit a wise and sympathetic approach in relation to the accommodation of change, who has spiritual insight and can lead the Church in ways to attract younger people so as to ensure growth.
- Leadership of the church community – a priest who will look to make use of and continue the integration of skills and gifts that exist in individuals and groups in the congregation.
- Personal Attributes – a warm, considerate communicator who likes people and has a good sense of humour.
- Services – a priest who is comfortable with our present forms of worship, including our use of organ and choir, while encouraging our congregation to appreciate the need for some change and the value of variety and prayer.

## Organisational Support

The support team presently comprises:

<b>Ros Wilson</b>	Assistant Priest in charge (Stipendiary 1 ½ days pwk.)
<b>Judith Lee</b>	to be appointed OLM Deacon in September.2006
<b>Julia Chard</b>	experienced authorised lay minister (Reader)
<b>Claire Chedzey</b> )	)
<b>Kate Davison</b> )	) authorised lay ministers in training to be admitted and licensed in
<b>Rosie Woodall</b> )	) October 2006

## Committees

The Parochial Church Council has established a number of committees to assist its work as follows:

Standing Committee	Worship Committee
Outreach Committee	Pastoral Care Committee
Hospitality Committee	Fabric Committee
Fund Raising Committee	Mission Support Committee

## Services

### **Sunday**

8.00am	Holy Communion	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays
10.45am	Family Service (when Baptisms take place)	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday (No Communion)
10.45am	Parish Communion (Followed by coffee)	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays
6.00pm	Sung Evensong Followed by a shortened Communion	Every Sunday On the 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday only

### **Tuesday**

9.15am Holy Communion

### **Thursday**

7.30pm Prayer and Praise

Robes have usually been worn at all services but practice is currently under review. There is a strong commitment to traditional music and language, although there is a willingness to introduce new forms on occasion.

The congregation is being encouraged to examine its traditional ways and has worked recently with George Rendell, a Diocesan Officer, to identify the church's strengths and weaknesses and to highlight areas for development and change. Outcomes include a well-attended and successful Lent Course, the establishment of a small number of active house groups, improved pastoral care and recognition of the need to improve communications

Links with the local school have been strengthened lately; there were about 200 children and parents at the last Christingle Service. A small Sunday school, that prefers to be known as the Sunday Gang, meets in the school and comes into the 10.45am service after the sermon; the average attendance is 9 children. A holiday club is being organised for the first time in many years during the summer holidays this year.

The average attendance at Sunday services is about 105 adults while at Christmas and Easter attendance typically exceeds 200.

There is a strong demand for **weddings, baptisms and funeral services** from people who are not regular members of the congregation, being attracted by the Church's pleasant setting and size.

There is an **active and experienced choir** with an **excellent organist/choir trainer**. Also a **flower arranging team** who decorate the church and provide flowers for weddings and other special events.

A branch of the **Mothers' Union** is based on the Church.

Two **car boot sales** take place on Frenchay Common each year. The church is opened and raises funds by providing refreshments.

The Church is also opened on afternoons in the summer for the sale of **Sunday Teas**; this is welcomed by many who visit the Common and not least by visitors to the adjacent hospital.

**Wednesday Lunches** are arranged, some in the Church, some elsewhere, particularly for people living alone. **Spring and Harvest** lunches are held in the Church following the 10.45 Sunday services.

The Church has a long history of support for **mission overseas** and is connected with the Church Mission Society. We also support the Mission to Seafarers The Leprosy Mission and SAT7, the broadcasting organisation for Christians in the Middle East.

### **Church Building**

The Church was designed by the architect Henry Rumley and was consecrated in 1834. It is a grade 2 listed building and regarded as a fine example of ecclesiastical architecture of the period.

The Church is built of local rubble sandstone with ashlar buttresses, mouldings and parapets. There is a pitched slate roof over the main nave and chancel, with lead flats to the side aisles/galleries. To the west end there is a tower and spire.

Inside the Church is a nave, with a chancel, side aisles to the north and south and a gallery. There is a good organ.

At the west end, a narthex social area (called the "Church Room") has been formed with a glass-panelled screen under the gallery and this is used for meetings of various church groups. The priest and choir vestries are to the south of the chancel. A small porch is to the north side of the aisle. The tower has an entrance porch, with a toilet at ground level.

### **The Bells**

Above the porch there is an open ringing chamber at gallery level with a light ring of six bells above. There is an active and enthusiastic team of ringers who ring for the main Sunday service, weddings, funerals and other special occasions.

### **Other Churches/links**

The Parish of Frenchay is within the Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery, the Area Dean being David Adams, Vicar of All Saints Church, Longwell Green.

The Deanery is part of the Archdeanery of Malmesbury and the Archdeacon is Alan Hawker.

Within the Parish there is a Roman Catholic Church, a Unitarian Chapel and a Society of Friends. The Friends are members of the Council of Churches, the Unitarians are Associate members. We do not have active links with the Roman Catholic Church although they are well disposed towards us.

## **Finance**

There have been difficulties in paying the Parish Share in recent years and a major challenge will be the raising of funds for roof repairs (c £100.000 ) with lesser sums for disabled access and kitchen improvements..

July 2006