



THE CHELMSFORD DIOCESE: A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP GULI

Covering Essex and East London, Chelmsford is one of the largest, most diverse dioceses in the Church of England. We are home to more than 3 million people representing many socio-economic, ethnic and faith groups and a fantastic variety of cultures and traditions.

We have enormous opportunities for mission and service and considerable challenges to face and resolve as we continue to deal with the local, national and global challenges that have a direct impact on our parish churches, schools, chaplaincies and the communities we serve.

It is within this context and following a period of listening and discernment that started when I became Bishop of Chelmsford in 2021, that we set out a future direction of travel as a Diocese with a focus on [travelling well together](#):

- Our purpose is to love God and to love our neighbour; to worship faithfully and empowered by the Holy Spirit, witness to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ as we serve the extraordinarily diverse array of local communities in Essex and East London.
- Our approach is to enable and empower parishes and worshipping communities to discern how they are to be God's people in their own very different local contexts and as part of one diocesan family.
- Underpinning our approach is an invitation to a way of being articulated by shared diocesan values which might shape how we travel together, support each other and provide mutual accountability.

Since I became Bishop of Chelmsford, I have witnessed people's great warmth and I have seen first-hand, the wonderful things going on in our parishes and schools. Any new priest joining us in the Diocese of Chelmsford does so at a time of challenge, a time of change and most significantly a time of hope for our Church in this most diverse and vibrant of dioceses.

+Guli

Bishop of Chelmsford



**FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT OUR
DIOCESAN
DIRECTION OF
TRAVEL AND VALUES
HERE**



THE COLCHESTER AREA: A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP ROGER

Manningtree has become one of the most sought-after locations in the country – especially for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of London life. Nestled along the Stour estuary, it has its own small family-friendly beach. Wrabness with its impressive 60-acre nature reserve is just seven miles away. The Town Council's website says 'Manningtree has an active, friendly and neighbourly community, with many voluntary organisations, thriving businesses and great places to shop, eat, drink and stay overnight'. A short walk takes you into Dedham Vale and the world-famous views immortalised by painter John Constable. At the same time, a short car or train journey transports you to the magnificent town of Colchester. And London Liverpool Street Station is still less than an hour away by train.



The result of all this is that Mistley, Manningtree, Lawford (and – to some extent – Bradfield) have seen lots of new houses spring up – and the potential for outreach, evangelism and church growth has rocketed. The work within the local primary schools has been key in linking with the many new families who have made a home in this part of Essex. The local Secondary School has a history of good church links. The churches also have the capability of showcasing what is best about the Church of England – from band-led contemporary worship to high quality Common Worship services of Holy Communion with a very good church choir.

There are some really good people here who are looking forward to making good progress under a new and inspiring leader. It is a fairly new grouping of churches so will still need some work to deepen relationships and put good systems in place. There is much to do – but the future looks very exciting indeed!

+Roger

Bishop of Colchester



WELCOME TO CROSS REACH CHURCHES

Welcome to Cross Reach Churches. We are a group of three parishes in North Essex with a desire to worship God, to love each other, to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus and to serve the communities around us.

Our northern parish boundaries follow the course of the River Stour. Near the eastern end of Mistley lies a stretch of the river called 'Cross Reach'. Running from the quay, out into the estuary, people pass through Cross Reach every day, going out on their adventures, and coming back home. We named our Church Group after this stretch of the river, to remember that we should be reaching out with the love of Jesus - the same love that reached out to us. We named it to remember that we are all on a journey. And we named it to remember that the Lord will watch over our coming and going, both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:8)

We'd love you to consider joining our church family here at Cross Reach. We have our challenges and our worries, but are also excited about the opportunities to grow as we go forward together.

As part of the process for writing this Profile document, everyone in our churches was given the opportunity to fill in a questionnaire and share their thoughts on our churches, our mission and ministry, and our hopes for the future. We hope and pray that this document reflects our church family as well as possible.

Huge thanks are due to the team who worked on this Profile, our PCCs, and all those church members who contributed to the questionnaire.



WHO WE ARE

From our questionnaire responses there was a wide degree of agreement regarding the purpose of the churches. We are here:

- To worship God together.
- To be built up in our Christian faith, to encourage each other in our walk with God, and to witness to God's love, forgiveness and care.
- To create a Christian community, reaching out with the love of God to as many residents of Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley and Bradfield as possible.
- To be a blessing and a light in our local communities.



We are a relatively new group, joined together in 2023, made up of three separate churches: St. Mary & St. Michael's, Mistley with Manningtree and St. Lawrence, Bradfield, which have been linked in different ways for nearly 200 years, and St. Mary's, Lawford.

The parishes are currently suspended and the Diocese is looking to appoint one person as Priest-in-charge at Mistley with Manningtree and Bradfield, and as Curate-in-charge at Lawford. The plan is that the new group will soon be formed by pastoral reorganisation and that the appointee will be made the first incumbent.

There are good relationships between the three churches, with a strong desire for unity and to work together effectively, but we are aware that our church set-up is in its early days and we are looking for someone to help us grow together, and to move forward in love and fellowship.

Our church family is welcoming, enthusiastic, engaged and hard-working, and makes excellent cakes. We represent a wide range of spiritualities and traditions in our family and team: this has its challenges, but it also contributes to a really important sense of variety and authenticity in our group.

Following the full revision this year, there are 171 people across the Electoral Rolls of our three churches, the majority of whom are age 60+. We have a small number of fairly regular children in church on a Sunday, and a slightly larger number of irregular children, but we have good connections with pre-schoolers and younger primary-age children at some of our midweek groups. We are very aware of the lack of connection with older children and younger adults in our churches and realise that at present we are doing little to attract them. We are keen to find practical ways to address this issue.

We currently have:

A dedicated and experienced team which currently includes (but is not limited to):

Two self-supporting Associate Ministers

A self-supporting Curate

Four ministers with Permission to Officiate and good relationships with other local vicars across the deanery

Two Readers

Two Lay Ministers

Two Authorised Local Preachers

Five Church Wardens in post

A number of pastoral visitors

Two Administrators who are paid for a total of 24 hours every week.

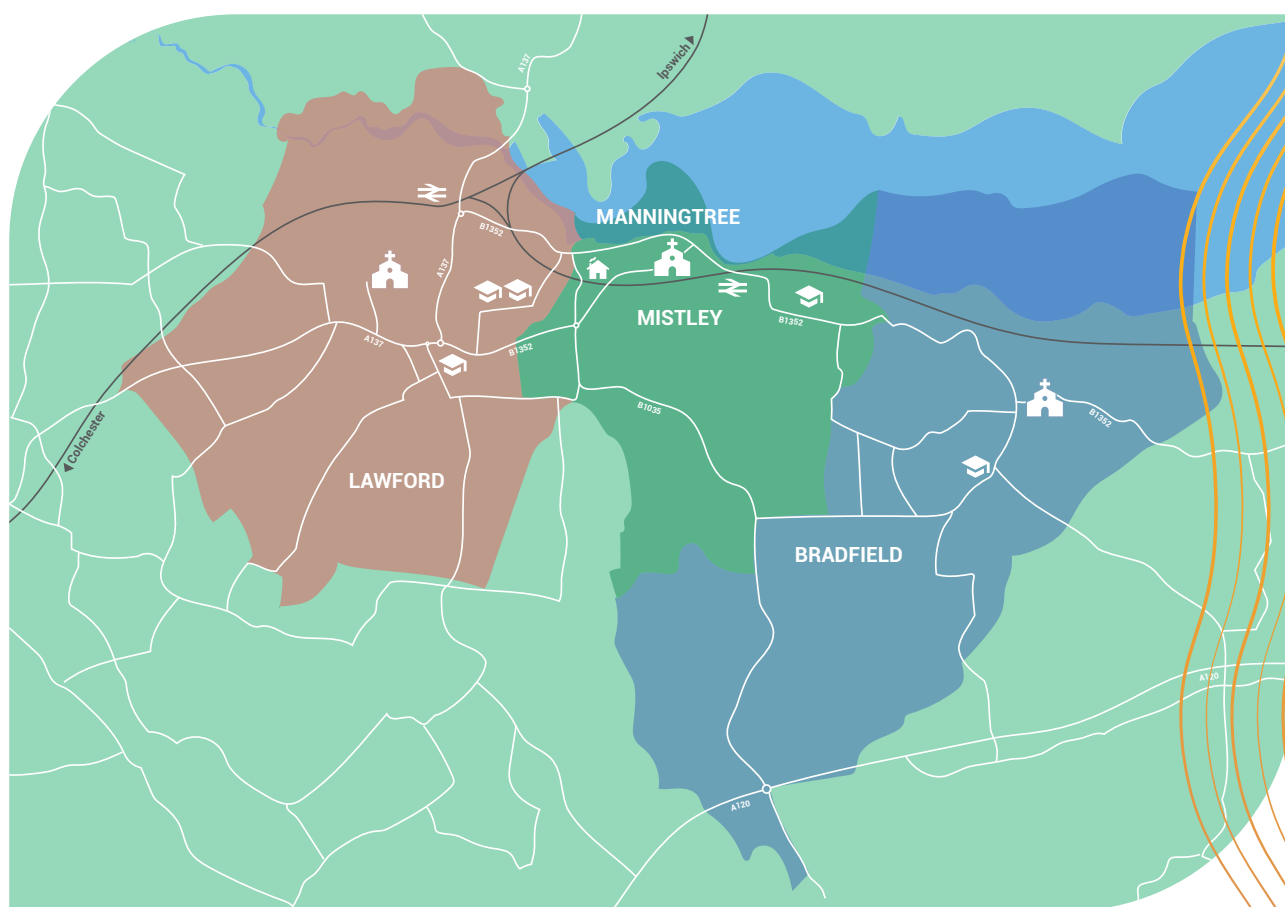
Three dedicated PCCs which work well together

Three well-looked after church buildings, two with connected meeting rooms and one with a separate Church Hall.

An excellent purpose-built Rectory close to the middle of Manningtree



THE AREA WE SERVE




 **3 CHURCHES**


 **5 SCHOOLS**

 **THE RECTORY**


MANNINGTREE


 Population in 2021 **874**

MISTLEY


 Population in 2021 **2,957**


MANNINGTREE + MISTLEY

 Total population 2021 **3,851**


 Approx. houses **2,600 + 766**
built/approved
since '21


BRADFIELD

 Population in 2021 **1,249**

 Approx. houses **506**

LAWFORD

 Population in 2021 **4,828**

 Approx. houses **2,500 + 440**
built/approved
since '21



WHAT WE ARE SEEKING TO BE

The three-parish group is relatively new and we are keen to see it develop, enabling a range of activities both in the churches and in the communities. There is a significant amount of new housing being built in the parishes and a number of potential areas of growth have been identified. This appointment gives the opportunity to be involved in the early stages of growing something new, and by God's grace, something exciting and fruitful. The churches would like:

- To be **offering worship to God** which is good, authentic and honest, in ways that honour and respect both the traditional services and more contemporary expressions.
- To be **growing in our life with God**, building a firm foundation of discipleship, faith, prayer, and whole-life-ministry.
- To **develop a real group identity and ethos**, doing what we can do best at a group level, whilst recognising the differences between the three parishes.
- To be **bold and innovative in times of change**, responding both to the impacts of population growth in our area and changes in church attendance.
- To be **growing in unity and love for each other**, and for our life together to be supportive, encouraging, and to result in witness, care and service.
- To be **learning together**, through preaching, small groups, courses and in other ways.
- To **pray more, better, and deeper** - both as individuals and together.
- To be **more connected into our local communities**, both as individuals but also as churches, offering practical service and being a blessing where we have been placed.
- To **grow our connections with the local schools**, providing support, help and a Christian input as far as they want it.
- For the **churches to better represent the communities around us**, in terms of age range, gender, occupation and in other ways. We are particularly keen to reach more people age 20-50.
- For our **churches to be financially stable**.
- To **continue to maintain our buildings** in ways that are responsible, respectful, and enable us and the community to use them effectively.



WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

In order to grow and move forward, we are looking for a new Priest-in-Charge who feels called by God to this ministry, this family and this community. We believe that the successful candidate is likely to be someone who has the following experience, abilities, and traits.

A person who:

- Is an **effective leader and manager** with experience of managing a number of distinct worshipping communities
- Is a **humble and encouraging team player** who empowers people to give of their best - and has the ability to challenge where needed.
- Is a **good, clear, and consistent communicator**, particularly with the team, the PCCs, and the wider church.
- Is **self-aware**, knows their own limitations, and is willing to embrace other ways of ministering.
- Has a **good track record of leading a change process**, both as the new group is formed and in the existing parishes, inspiring growth and keeping people on board.
- Can **lead with sensitivity and understanding** where change has already, or may in the future, lead to a sense of loss or hurt.
- Has a **heart for imaginative and effective evangelism**.
- Recognises the important place of the **local schools** as key gateways into the communities, and will work to develop links and relationships.
- Has a proven ability to work with others to **discern and clarify the way forward for the church**.
- Has an **ability to experience God** and enable others to encounter God across a wide variety of expressions of worship.
- Is a **preacher and teacher**, sharing God's Word engagingly with contemporary relevance.
- Will **help and encourage us to pray**.
- Is able to equip and encourage church members in the use of the **gifts of the Spirit** and growing the fruit of the Spirit.
- Has a **heart for enabling pastoral ministry** both inside and outside the churches.
- Is **willing to be a visible presence** in the communities - not having to be everywhere, but recognising the important times and places to be present.
- Has a track record of **working well with other leaders** of churches, civic groups, and the community.
- Is **competent in the use of IT** and recognises the importance of digital and social media for the Church's mission.
- Is known for **managing time well** and setting healthy boundaries.
- More than anything else, is **walking closely with Jesus**, and will encourage us all to do the same.



WHAT WE DO

REGULAR WORSHIP

The current service pattern which has been running since the beginning of 2023, has focused on providing a service in each of the three churches on most Sundays. The service pattern was designed to be as seeker and visitor-friendly as possible, with largely the same type of service at the same time in the same place every week, and some additional services around this. We therefore have mainly traditional-style services at Bradfield and Mistley with worship led on the organ, and mainly contemporary-style services at Lawford, with worship led by musicians or using song videos, and activities offered for children – we are currently only able to provide children's work at one venue a week, either at Lawford, or at joint services.

There are regular organists at Bradfield and Mistley, a pianist at Lawford, and a music group and guitarists who generally lead at Lawford. There are choirs in each church which have recently been working together, generally at one of the traditional communion services each week.

We mainly use Common Worship liturgy in our services, but occasionally use the Book of Common Prayer for specific events.



WK.	BRADFIELD	MISTLEY	LAWFORD
1	0930: Morning Prayer	1015: Holy Communion	1100: Contemporary Worship
2	0930: Holy Communion	1015: Morning Prayer (usually Celtic-style)	0915: Holy Communion 1100: Contemporary Worship
3	0930: Morning Prayer	1015: Holy Communion	1100: Contemporary Worship
4	0930: Holy Communion	1015: Morning Prayer	1100: Contemporary Communion
			Tuesday 0945: Holy Communion
5	Joint Service of Holy Communion in a mix of styles		

During the vacancy, Mistley has also occasionally swapped the second Sunday 1015 service for a service of Evening Prayer.

We also hold Walking Church – an alternative expression of church, usually meeting monthly from Spring to Autumn for a walk, to spend time together, to pray for the community, and to see God in it all.

The consistency and shape of the service pattern does not suit everyone, and we would welcome and encourage a review of the service pattern by a new incumbent.



REGULAR SERVICES

In 2024, numbers attending our normal services (excluding special school services) varied between the type of service and where they were being held:

BRADFIELD

Adults 17-64 Children 0-4 (average 1)

MISTLEY

Adults 14-54 Children 0-4 (average 1)

LAWFORD

Adults 18-44 Children 0-7 (average 4)

In 2024, taking all services into account, there was an **average weekly total of around 108 people** attending services across the three churches. If you take out a small number of big services (School Carols, Remembrance etc.) there was an **average weekly total of over 95**.

OCCASIONAL SERVICES

We are privileged to connect with our community through the occasional services of baptisms and thanksgivings, weddings, wedding blessings, and funerals, memorials, and burials. In 2024 we held:

BAPTISMS	7
WEDDINGS	7
FUNERALS	20
BURIALS OF ASHES	15

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND FAITH

The three churches used the LLF course material and there has been some discussion of the issues within the PCCs. Whilst there is a range of opinion on this matter, no decision on the use of the PLF has yet been taken. We are seeking someone who will help us to navigate this question with sensitivity and wisdom.



WORKING WITH OTHER CHURCHES

THE HARWICH DEANERY:

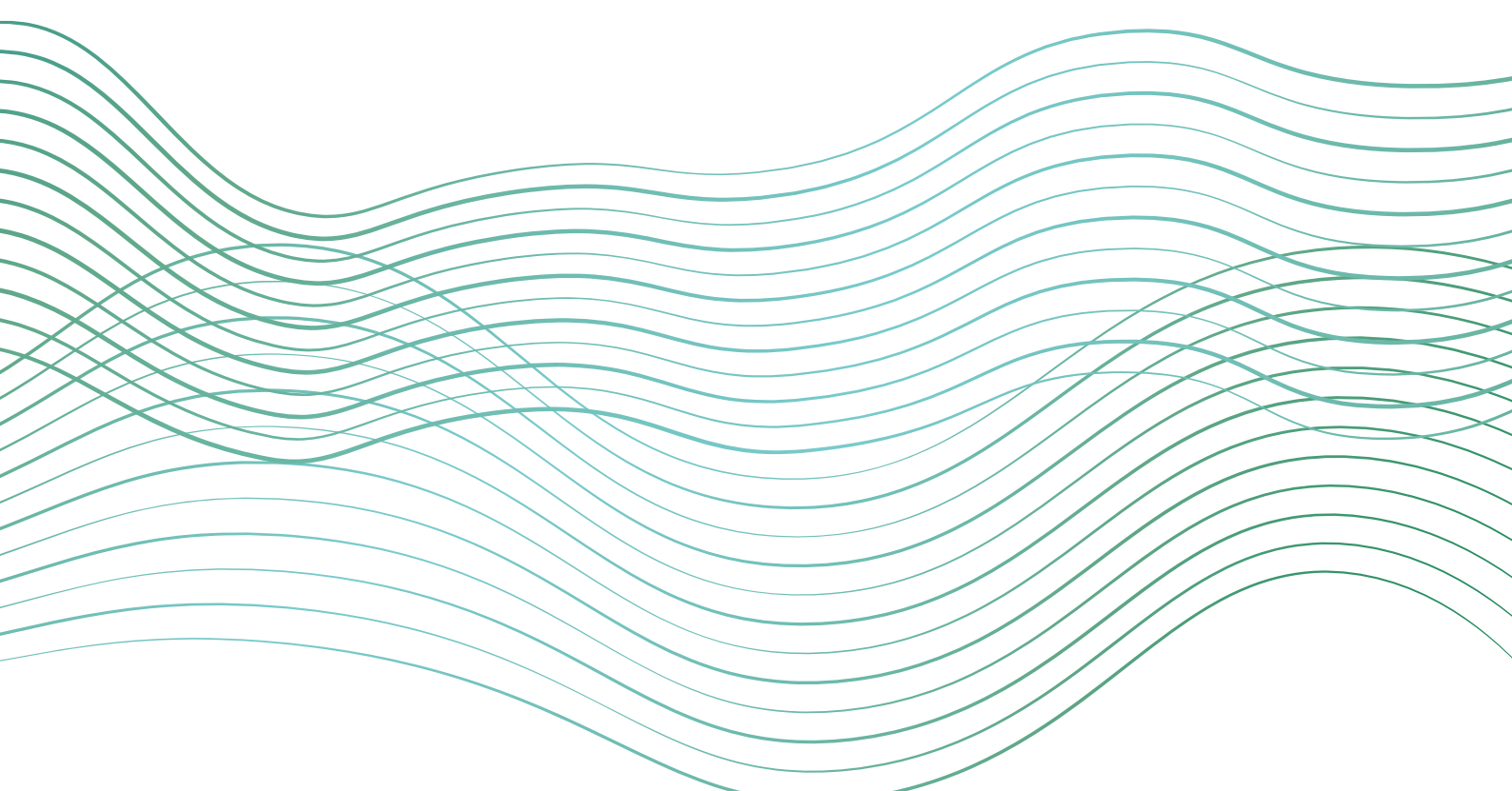
Harwich Deanery, which has five stipendiary posts including Cross Reach, is a small, largely rural Deanery. We have a very supportive Area Dean and chapter meetings are open to LLMs, SSMS and those with PTO. We are seeking to support each other and find ways of working together. There may be an opportunity for the appointee to have a wider deanery role.

LOCAL CHURCHES

Our churches have had good relationships with Manningtree Methodist Church and Trinity Free Church over the years. It has recently been a time of change, as the Methodist Church appointed a new minister this summer, and Trinity is also currently seeking a new lead minister.

POSSIBLE LOCAL CHURCH COLLABORATION:

'River Church' is a recent HTB supported plant in Ipswich under a Bishops Mission Order, specifically to attract 18–30s and those with no previous church background. A number of Manningtree residents are attending and tentative enquiries have been made as to whether we would wish to work with them on future projects. Whilst this clearly cannot go any further till we have an incumbent, we would want a new Rector to be open to such initiatives and opportunities.



CHURCH GROUPS

There are a number of church groups which meet for social, support and other purposes. These include:

PRAYER & STUDY:

Morning Prayers
Monthly Prayer Group
Home Groups and courses

MUSIC:

Choirs
Lawford Handbells Team
Bell Ringing Team

CHILDREN & FAMILIES:

Weekly Edward Bear Toddler Group
Termly Messy Church
Monthly Messy Play

SUPPORT & FRIENDSHIP:

St Lawrence Guild
Men's Breakfast
Knit and Knatter
Ladies in Friendship together (LIFT)
Singing for Pleasure – in partnership with the Manningtree Town Council and Manningtree & District Dementia Support.
Support in Loss Coffee Morning
Bradfield Tea Party

SHARED INTERESTS:

Art Club
Crafty Talents Craft Club



CHURCH EVENTS (MANY AS FUNDRAISING):

- Quiz Nights
- Wreath Making Workshops
- Dog Show Day
- Tabletop Sales
- Christmas Tree Festival
- Open Gardens
- Cheese & Wine/Curry Night
- Murder Mystery
- Community Jubilee Events
- Local History Events
- Sponsored Swim
- Breakfast coffee mornings
- Occasional concerts



WORKING WITH SCHOOLS:

There are four primary schools and one secondary school within our parishes: Bradfield Primary, Highfields (in Lawford Parish), Lawford C of E Primary, Stourview Church of England Academy (in Mistley Parish), and Manningtree High School (in Lawford Parish). We are very aware of the huge opportunity that our schools provide, and would be looking for someone who is excited by exploring this further.

Lawford C of E Primary School has a long-standing close relationship with the churches, with good and encouraging links. Before the vacancy, there was weekly worship in the school led by the Rector, which has continued as far as possible, and the school also visits the churches regularly for special festivals and events. The school is keen to continue to have a close relationship with the churches.

Stourview C of E Primary Academy, previously known as Mistley Norman School, has had very close relationships with Mistley Church. The school reopened in autumn 2024 after enforced closure for 18 months due to RAAC problems, and is now run by the Canonium Learning Trust. Numbers are slowly increasing and links with the church including termly and special festival visits have been re-established. The school is keen to foster these further, and during the vacancy several of the ministry team have enjoyed visiting and leading monthly collective worship.

Highfields Primary has had links with several local churches over the years, and has recently made enquiries about growing the links again with the Cross Reach Churches. We are progressing this as far as possible, but also identify it as a new and exciting area to explore in the future.

Bradfield Primary has friendly links with the churches, and we enjoy sharing special services, particularly at Christmas, with the school.

Manningtree High School has had some links with the churches over the years, but we currently have no regular connections or input at the school. This could be an exciting area to explore in the future.



COMMUNITY GROUPS:

The churches have good links with groups in the community, including:

- **Parish Councils:** our churches represent three parish councils and one town council, and have good relationships with all of them. There are great opportunities for working with the Parish Councils at civic events, which could be explored even more than we do already.
- **Manningtree & District Food Bank:** our churches were involved in the setting up of the Manningtree Food Bank, and are still strongly linked to it.
- **The Hub:** this was a community venture, set up by the churches in Manningtree to provide a space particularly for the teenagers of the area. The Hub has a premises on Manningtree High Street, which pre-pandemic provided weekly after-school drop-ins for teenagers. This has not been re-established for various reasons. It currently provides a weekly drop-in for adults on a Friday, including a Credit Union, which is still running. There are interesting opportunities for using The Hub more as a church, and with other churches in the area, for outreach and blessing the community.
- **Mistley Church Hall:** Mistley has a separate Church Hall, which can be hired for community use as well as use for the churches. This has given links to groups in the community, and is currently also making a small profit.
- **Acorn Village:** this is a charity based in Mistley, providing residential care and supported living for adults with learning disabilities. We are privileged to have members of Acorn in our church family particularly at Mistley and Lawford, and we have good relationships and connections with Acorn across all three churches.
- **Mistley Manor:** this is a residential care home in Mistley, specialising in dementia care. We are pleased to have several members from Mistley Manor regularly join in Sunday worship at Mistley, and a group from our churches leads monthly worship on site at Mistley Manor.



OUR BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

BRADFIELD

St. Lawrence dates mainly from the 13th century and was significantly added to in the 1840s. Over the last thirty-five years, considerable restoration and improvement has been carried out, and in 2008, a new extension was added, comprising a church meeting room, kitchen, toilet, and entrance lobby which is now the main entrance to the church.

The church is situated at the north end of the village and has a well-maintained churchyard, currently open for burials. The church is kept open during the daytime and is valued as a part of the social fabric of the community, as well as fulfilling its main function as a place of Christian worship.

The fabric of Bradfield Church is extremely well supported by the Friends of St. Lawrence (FOSL) which is a separate independent charity which raises considerable funds for a range of church projects. They have a reputation in the village for putting on excellent events and support good relationships between members of the church and the wider village, bringing the Village and Church communities together. FOSL has also published various books about the church, village and WW1 heroes.

LAWFORD

St Mary's Lawford is a historic church, dating back to the thirteenth century, but with much modernisation making it a versatile building able to be used for many varied purposes. It is open during the daytime for visitors. Attached to the Church is an extension, built in 1991, including a hall, kitchen, toilets, vestry, office and meeting room and providing disability access. In 2009 the interior of the church was modernised including removing all of the pews and replacing the flooring and in 2025 the church has installed a new air source heat pump heating system for the church and extension. As a historic building, the church obviously requires maintenance and repair, a significant amount of which is



carried out by the Friends of St Marys group. The churchyard is currently open for burials.

Restoration and maintenance work is well supported by the Friends of St. Mary's group, as well as an enthusiastic and dedicated fund-raising group.

MISTLEY

St Mary's Church, Mistley was built around 1870, and in the mid 1960's, when St Michael's church in Manningtree High Street was demolished due to structural issues, the two parishes were combined and Mistley Church was re-dedicated as St Mary and St Michael's Church, Mistley with Manningtree. Its Grade 2 listed, Victorian style architecture has many beautiful features and it is considered an excellent setting for concerts and events, being the largest such venue in the area. A lobby, toilet, and kitchen were added around 20 years ago, which greatly improved the functionality of the church. It also accommodates those with accessibility needs fairly well. The church is open during the week for visitors whenever possible.

As well as weekly Sunday worship the church is used at various times to facilitate local community concerts and school events. Whilst there are advantages in having such a large meeting place, in the winter the church can be cold as our present heating is inadequate even when running at its full capacity and along with our present sound system is in need of updating.

The Churchyard is now closed except for burials within existing plots, reserved plots, and the cremated remains areas, and is well maintained by Mistley Parish Council.

Mistley Church Hall is a five-minute walk away. This grade 2 listed building originally built in 1911 is owned and managed by the PCC. As it is centrally situated in the village it offers great potential with historical and architectural character and is used by community and church groups. Whilst it is in need of some updating and refurbishment, it currently provides an excellent meeting place for the church and community to use, and is currently making a small profit.



FINANCE SUMMARY FROM EACH CHURCH

ST LAWRENCE BRADFIELD:

2024

General Fund Income	£34,725
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General Fund Expenditure	£38,815
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Includes 10% charitable giving to a number of projects. (£3,044) Some additional donations were also made from special collections.

Parish Share: paid in full in 2024. (£24,610)

Historically, Parish Share has always been fully paid, but in 2024 it was re-balanced between Mistley and Bradfield, increasing from 37.5% to 50% of the total. This is likely to lead to Bradfield not being able to meet the full amount in the future without increases in giving or reduced costs.

In 2024 a project was completed for a new access stairway to the bell chamber in the tower. This was funded by donations and fund-raising, grant-making bodies and the Friends of St Lawrence Church. The total cost, not included in the above expenditure figure, was £42,180.

Funds at the end of 2024:	£11,595
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Of the above total, unrestricted funds = £5,938

ST MARY AND ST MICHAEL'S MISTLEY WITH MANNINGTREE:

2024

General Fund Income	£36,603
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General Fund Expenditure	£36,982
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Charitable giving was not possible from PCC funds in this year. Some donations were made from special collections.

Parish Share: 60% paid in 2024. (£15,000 of £24,859)

Historically, Parish Share has always been fully paid, but due to shortage of funds only 60% was paid in 2024. This situation is likely to re-occur without increases in giving or reduced costs.

A project to repair the lychgate (£14,683) was funded from the Restricted Churchyard Fund and payment for drainage work at the Church Hall was made from the funds raised by the now closed Mistley Friends group. A project to install new cupboards (£21,880) was also funded from Mistley Friends and the Refurbishment fund. These projects are not included in the above expenditure figures.

Funds at the end of 2024:	£67,611
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Of the above total, unrestricted funds = £7,862



ST MARY'S LAWFORD:**2024**

General Fund Income	£63,503
General Fund Expenditure	£60,458

St. Mary's did not make direct charitable giving. However, specific fund raising or collection of items has meant that the church has supported several local and national organisations.

Parish Share 62% paid in 2024 (£21,000 of £33.842). Historically, the Parish Share was paid in full, but this ceased to be the case from 2022 onwards. The amount paid in 2025 is likely to be at similar level to 2024, unless there is a significant change in income.

In 2024 the project to replace the woodchip boiler heating system for the church and hall with an air source heat pump system was commenced. The expenditure in 2024 was £69,652 (not included in the above expenditure figures) and there will be further costs in 2025 when the project will be completed. The funding for the entire project has been donated from a trust fund.

Funds at the end of 2024:	£105,138
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Of the above total, unrestricted funds = £23,249



WHERE YOU'LL LIVE

THE RECTORY

The Rectory is a great home, purpose-built in the 1980s and situated on a quiet estate in Mistley, within about 2 minutes' walk from the High Street in Manningtree and about 8 minutes' walk of Mistley Church in New Road. In recent years, the Diocese has been responsible for new windows, a new heating boiler and a solar panel installation. The PCCs are committed to the maintenance of the Rectory as necessary.

Downstairs it has a study (3.1m x 4.5m) and a toilet/washroom, both accessed from the entrance hall, and behind a further door, a lounge (3.5m x 5.8m), a dining room (3.7m x 3.7m), a kitchen (3.9m x 4.3m) and a utility room (3.5m x 1.9m).

Upstairs there is bedroom 1 (3.7m x 3.5m) with a wash basin, bedroom 2 (4.0m x 3.5m) with a wash basin, bedroom 3 (3.0m x 2.1m), bedroom 4 (4.0m x 2.7m) and bedroom 5 (or work room/storage etc.) (3.1m x 2.8m). The bathroom includes WC, basin, shower and bath (3.0m x 2.5m).

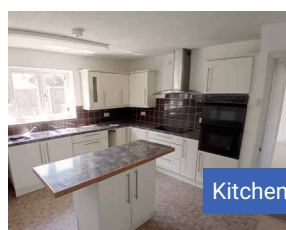
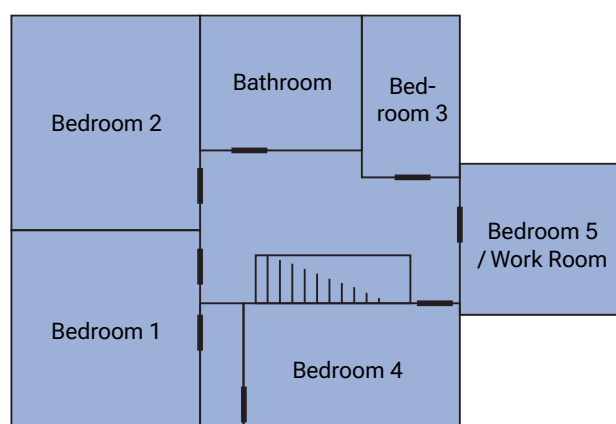
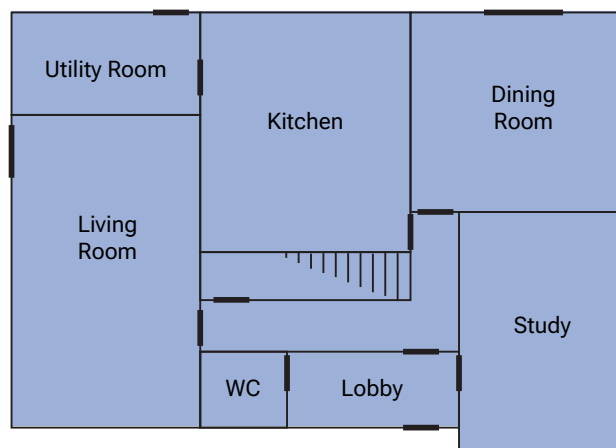
There are manageable gardens to front and rear, and a separate single garage plus space for off-road parking for another vehicle.

MANNINGTREE

The Rectory is a stone's throw from Manningtree, which is the UK's smallest town by area, but despite its size, it packs in lots of facilities, amenities, and shops, including two supermarkets, a bi-weekly outdoor market, a small theatre, a library, a community centre, and several well-loved restaurants and pubs. It also has a tiny, well-maintained sandy beach, and the river with opportunities for wild swimming, sailing, and more. It has easy access to Colchester and Ipswich by bus and train, and is less than an hour from London by train.

THE WIDER AREA

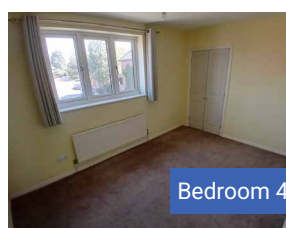
The parishes lie on the northern border of rural Essex, with lovely countryside and great facilities. The total population at the 2021



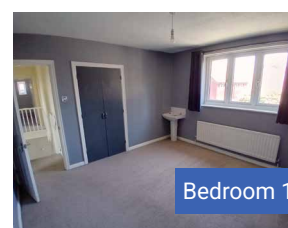
Kitchen



Living Room



Bedroom 4



Bedroom 1



census was just under 10,000, but this has now increased significantly with new building. This is bringing some change to the area, but also great opportunities for outreach and connections.

For information on Manningtree, please see above.

Mistley is a large village with an industrial past and growing housing, including at its centre the Edme Maltings Works and the Mistley Quay. Despite growth, particularly through large new estates, both still have a 'village' feel. Mistley has a Village Hall which provides facilities for many community groups, and for a regular Kids Club. Mistley has a few shops on its High Street, as well as cafes, a pub, a restaurant, and a railway station. Whilst Mistley is a very pleasant and growing area, there are small pockets of deprivation borne out in statistics from the Church Urban Fund.

Lawford is a large village, which is also seeing growing numbers of houses. The borders between Mistley, Manningtree and Lawford are unclear and often unknown to residents, and the combined area has sometimes been characterised together as a small town. It is a growing area with large new estates currently being built. There are meeting facilities in a Venture Centre and a smaller community hall, which provide facilities for many activities. There are a number of businesses in Lawford industrial estate and across the area, including several agricultural businesses.

Bradfield by contrast is a mid-size, rural parish with a strong village and community identity. The ecclesiastical parish of Bradfield includes Horsley Cross, which is a small rural hamlet. There is a village shop and Post Office, a pub, Village Hall, and camping and caravanning sites. There are also significant agricultural businesses in the parish.



GET IN TOUCH

If you'd like to know more, please do get in touch with us.

Further general information is also available from our website:

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