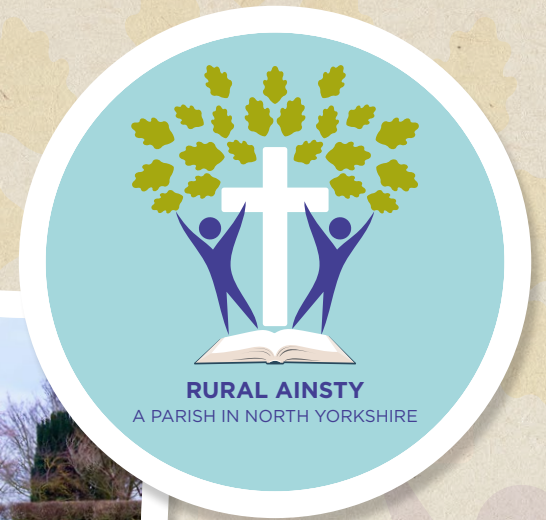


The Parish of Rural Ainsty, York

Parish Profile 2023




Welcome to our Parish...

We are one parish with 5 churches in the Diocese of York within the Deanery of New Ainsty. We are led by His Grace The Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell.

We are blessed to live in a beautiful and still part of the country, close to York, Harrogate and Leeds and connected through the national rail and motorway networks.

Our parish consists of farms and villages within a beautiful rural landscape changing with the seasons. In such an environment, it is easy to believe that God has a purpose for each one of us; we are excited to discover God's plans for His Kingdom amongst our communities. We look forward to welcoming you as you discern with us whether to become part of our growing Church Family.



*He tends His flock
like a shepherd: He
gathers the lambs
in His arms and
carries them close
to His heart.*

(Isaiah 40:11)

Bishop's Letter of Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the post of vicar of the Parish of Rural Ainsty in the Deanery of New Ainsty. We are at a critical time in the life of this Diocese and if appointed you will be leading this Parish with the other ministers, the churchwardens and the PCC as both the Deanery and the Diocese seek with the help of the Holy Spirit to realise the Diocesan Vision of *Living Christ's Story*.

The Diocese is going through a time of change as we explore *Living Christ's Story* expressed in four strategic goals:

- Becoming more like Christ as we live his Story today.
- Reaching those we currently do not, particularly through our Multiply and Mustard Seed projects.
- Growing churches of missionary disciples who are younger and more diverse.
- Transforming our finances and structures so that we can support a presence in all our neighbourhoods and networks of the Diocese.

The challenge is to embed this vision and its strategic goals in the life of the Parish as well as to take up the particular opportunities for mission which this Parish affords. As is clear from this Parish Profile, collaborative ministry which affirms and supports lay ministry and respects the diversity of the villages and their churches is key to the fruitfulness of this mission. The parish seeks to grow in spiritual depth and numerical attendance and with its tradition of prayer groups, holiday clubs, work with

families and children, pastoral care and community focus, there is much to build on. Ancient buildings also offer opportunities for heritage mission engaging visitors and local schools, albeit from beyond the parish. Working with colleagues and parishes across the Deanery and in partnership with Methodist friends is also vital for flourishing. As a parish rooted in rural life, the seasons of the year and agricultural festivals offer opportunities for mission as expressed in the recent *How Village Churches Thrive: A Practical Guide* (London: CHP, 2022)

What makes this an exciting and attractive role is the support of the parishioners who desire to live out their faith publicly and imaginatively in this delightful rural setting.

The details of the appointment are contained in this Profile. May the Spirit guide you as prayerfully you consider whether to apply for this role.

† John Selby



New Ainsty Deanery

Welcome from The Reverend Nick Morgan, Area Dean

Thank you for your interest in a ministry post in the New Ainsty Deanery. The following is based on a recently completed Deanery Plan (July 2022) which emerged as part of the York Diocese's Living Christ's Story process.

You can read more about this on the Diocesan website.

OVERVIEW

New Ainsty is a largely rural deanery: a combination of small villages where most or all amenities apart from its church are long gone; commuter / dormitory villages with schools and local shops; farming communities; large, thriving villages awash with amenities and social life, and the town of Tadcaster. Some of our rural communities have a population of over 60s with no younger folk, while others have a lot of young couples and families.

While most of the deanery looks towards York, the villages on the western edge also look towards Wetherby, Harrogate, and Leeds. A wide range of churchmanship is represented across the deanery: Eucharistically-focused Common Worship; thriving lay-led services; Book of Common Prayer; Celtic-inspired services; High Church Mass; Messy Church and other Fresh Expressions, and creative seasonal services which create strong connections with our communities. There is one Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodist church in one village (Hessay).

Lay-led services are a strength of the deanery, supported by a mutually supportive chapter which is committed to releasing all God's people into ministry, and which values the input of readers and retired clergy at chapter meetings. There are also a number of lay-led Multiply projects across the deanery.

Statistically-speaking, there are no Ministry Units identified as areas of significant deprivation (indeed, there are large pockets of wealth), but there are many who struggle financially or socially, and there are identifiable areas of relative deprivation and social challenge. While there is little in the way of ethnic diversity, there is a static, permanent traveller site within the deanery (and other sites are used seasonally), and there are small numbers of refugees, including recently arrived Ukrainian families.

Access to public services remains a challenge for many rural communities, and increasing fuel prices are creating massive challenges for those who commute as well as those not connected to the mains gas network.



Deanery priorities and key principles

MISSION PRIORITIES

1. Making and nurturing new disciples; collaborating and communicating across the deanery, and making use of mixed modes (including online) to increase access.
2. Making our Multiply projects sustainable.
3. Engagement with new housing areas and communities we do not serve effectively at present.
4. Better communication and visibility of our mission and ministry.
5. Working across parish and other boundaries: developing a generous-hearted, non-tribal, collaborative approach to our shared ministry.
6. Nurturing and growing our existing church communities.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. A commitment to growing everyday faith for all God's people.
2. Growing the confidence of the laity in ministry, evangelism, discipleship, involvement in the leading of worship, and in living out our faith at work, home, school, social activities, and in how we engage with society, culture, and the world.
3. Develop local and online training opportunities to increase access to training.
4. A commitment to the local: in service, fellowship, worship & engagement, working ecumenically where appropriate.
5. Streamlining structures of governance and administration where possible to make better use of resources and allow more focus of clergy on their diaconal and priestly vocations, and in overseeing and mentoring lay ministry.



Who we are

We are a people on a journey spiritually and physically.

We live in our two hamlets and five villages –Bickerton, Catterton, Bilton, Healaugh, Hessay, Moor Monkton and Wighill. We are strengthened by being one in governance; one team, one PCC, one set of parish accounts.

We are caring for each other and sharing with each other. We are building unity and community and growing spiritually and practically. We work with our Methodist family through our Local Ecumenical Partnership in Hessay, with our sister parishes across the New Ainsty Deanery and the York Methodist Circuit through collaboration and mutual encouragement.

As we journey, we are aware of our spiritual heritage in our ancient Saxon buildings on ground consecrated nearly a thousand years ago.

Whilst each village and church has its own unique character and traditions, we live together as one worshipping community. We embrace both traditional values and patterns as well as more contemporary and innovative forms of worship. We seek to be inclusive of all including our existing and potential future church family; growing in our faith, and making new disciples.

As one body members bring their different strengths and skills:

- building community through social interaction
- bereavement counselling, (Cruse counsellor)
- family and children's work (Multiply funding approved and available)
- foodbank collections
- holiday clubs
- historical events (eg. Battle of Marston Moor)
- inner healing ministry (Bethel Sozo, Big Green Heart)
- music
- pastoral team, with Authorised Lay Minister
- re-enactment of Live Nativity and Easter passion
- small groups for Bible study, prayer, the Alpha Course, Living Free, The Bible Course
- youth work, (Part Time Worker)
- 24/7 prayer events



Our Team

We are a team working together in increasing strength across the parish. Our leadership comprises an Authorised Lay Minister, 4 church wardens and a part time youth worker and a cohesive and united PCC. We each bring different spiritual and ministry gifts, experience and knowledge. Our church wardens meet regularly and work effectively as a team, as does the PCC which has met on a monthly basis since the start of the vacancy.

OUR WORSHIP

We gather together to pray and worship on zoom and in person looking to bring life and peace to our communities through Sunday service, small groups and school assemblies.

We hold a range of Sunday morning services across the parish, including a Methodist led service once per month. Our services are of varying degrees of formality and informality. Some services are lay-led. Currently we hold one main Sunday morning service per week as well as a number of predominantly lay-led additional services. The venues rotate around the churches of the parish.

We are working to develop a pattern of different styles and forms of worship, that will meet the needs of all of our community; from family and youth to the older generations; from formal liturgy to contemporary and lively or more contemplative and reflective service styles.

We recognise that each village and church has its own history, culture and traditions. We are mindful of ensuring that we celebrate the rich diversity and uniqueness that this represents

across our parish alongside our overall vision for unity and growth.

Approximately twice a month we hold alternative lay-led worship and prayer events on Sunday evenings, again with the emphasis very much on informality, worship, prayer, bible study, reflection and of course deepening our Christian fellowship.

Worship music is a mix of modern and traditional hymns with organ accompaniment and contemporary worship songs, with a variety of instrumentation.

As we build our reverence for worship, for scripture, for prayer and our respect for people and places, we look for someone to come and journey with us who will enable us to grow, who will illuminate, enthuse and encourage us that together we may be set alight with the love of God.



The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

(Revelation 22:17)

Our Finances

Despite some challenging years recently (including periods of online services only due to covid) our accounts are in a relatively healthy state. We have operating reserves amounting to a little over 3 months of operating costs.

We are signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme, and we aim to increase the proportion of regular online giving in order to aid in our cash flow processes.

Whilst at this point in time we have healthy reserves, parish giving has fallen in the past 12 months due to a number of key contributors moving on from our parish and hence no longer giving to the parish. We are however hopeful of growing our congregation and through this we also hope to grow our giving over the next 12 month period and into the future.

We hold regular fundraising events in our local communities and have had previous successes in securing grant funding for specific purposes.

OUR SAFEGUARDING

The Parish of Rural Ainsty is committed to welcoming and serving young people and vulnerable adults within our communities.

We are therefore committed to following safeguarding guidance from the Diocese and have procedures in place to enable this to happen. These include ensuring that DBS checks are undertaken. Training with regard to safeguarding is offered to volunteers and discussion at village church and Parish level regarding safeguarding is encouraged, with support from church wardens, local safeguarding representatives and the diocese.



The Vicarage

The vicarage is in Thorpe Arch a lovely village closely adjoining the Parish. The vicarage is a four bedroom detached house with three reception rooms, a large double garage (which has been used as a workshop by previous clergy and their spouses) and parking for several vehicles on the drive; and large gardens with an open aspect across the river Wharfe towards the village of Boston Spa. There are two entrances to the vicarage from the road: one for the family, the other for visitors to the clergy study.

Superfast fibre broadband connections are available in Church Causeway from a number of suppliers.

The vicarage is not currently wheelchair accessible.



Our Churches and Communities

Bilton-in-Ainsty with Bickerton

The ancient parish church of St Helen stands at a crossroads in both space and time.

The church building dates back almost 900 years but there is evidence of Christian worship taking place for over 1000 years on this crossroads North to South and inland Westwards from the coast. The new Christian communities of Anglo Saxon Britain stood firm in their faith here in the face of Viking invaders from the East bringing their pagan gods.

Nearly seven centuries later the Church of St Helen again stood witness and served as both a prison and field hospital for Royalist soldiers as the decisive Civil War Battle of Marston Moor between King and Parliament raged nearby.

The West End and nave of St Helen's provides a wide-open space which is ideally suited to hosting local community events. Amongst these and most famously (attracting national historical attention) is the annual commemoration, in partnership with one of our neighbouring churches, All Saints Long Marston, of the Battle of Marston moor, one of the key turning points in the Civil War.

Once again St Helen's stands at a crossroads in time, with the decline in Christian worship and increase in secularity felt across

our nation. Steeped in over 1000 years of Christian prayer and worship we pray that St Helen's will once again stand against this turning tide and be the hearth where the embers still glow and once again the fire of revival will be lit and spread across our parish of Rural Ainsty and beyond.

OTHER INFORMATION

Bilton-in-Ainsty with Bickerton consists of two separate villages with outlying farms. Bilton-in-Ainsty and Bickerton have similar populations of approximately 150 and 200 respectively.

The villages lie either side of the Wetherby to York Road (B1224). Rudgate, a Roman road, crosses the Wetherby-York Road and links Tadcaster with Boroughbridge.

A bus service between York and Wetherby runs through the villages.

As well as farms there are a number of businesses, including rural businesses within the boundaries of the two villages. There is a public house in Bilton in Ainsty, The Tickled Trout Inn.



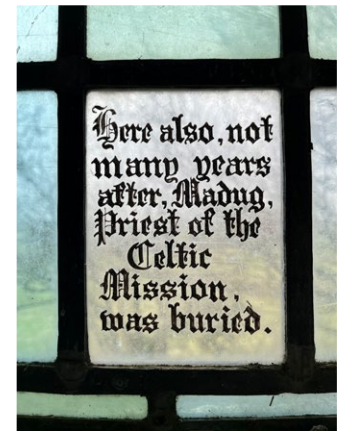
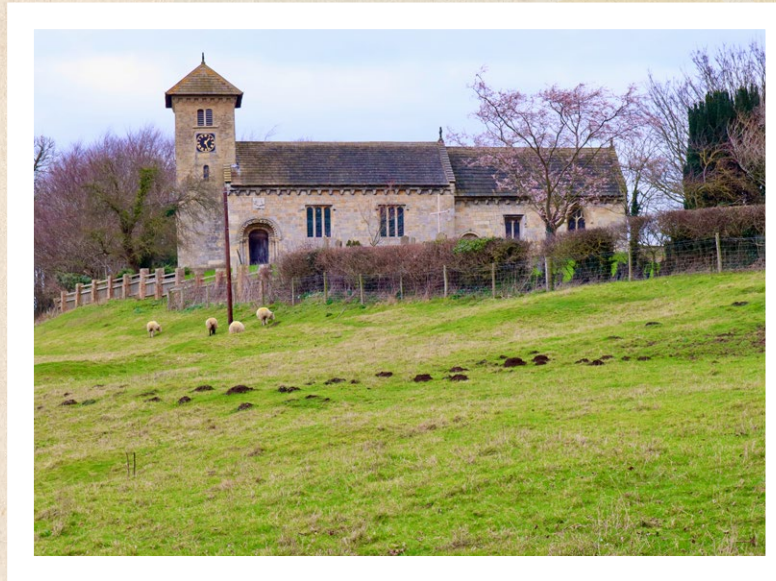
Healaugh and Catterton

The conservation village of Healaugh runs atop a ridge in the Vale of York. It was the home of the Brooksbank family (now of royal connection) for 200 years and still bears marks of the feudal system. With ten working farms within the parish boundary and only around 50 houses, it is rural in character in contrast to the adjoining hamlet of Catterton where recent barn conversions have created a buzzing hub of some twenty dwellings.

The Saxon church was built near the site of the Hermitage of St Hieu marked by a tiny pane of glass in the west window. The longevity of the spiritual heritage marks the place, housing the tomb of Philip Lord Wharton a prominent puritan, whose bequest of land, enabling a bible to be presented to any person of the village who could recite a number of Psalms and the shorter catechism, is today part of the Bible Society.

The Old Hall is built on the site of a puritan chapel and the church architect and theist Charles Voysey was appointed vicar in 1864.

Youth work has thrived here with the Loft Club growing into a Tadcaster based youth charity The Bridge Project. Annual 'live nativity' productions and the Easter Passion in the church and an adjacent stable yard draw crowds from far and wide and the summer holiday clubs have been a vibrant part of the church life for some years. Two youth from the village are now in full time Christian ministry. The part time youth worker lives in the village.



Daily prayer inspired by Ffald-y-Brenin has been our pattern for several years and via Zoom has spread across our parish as we seek revival in our nation.

In recent years a charity Big Green Heart (where Forgiving is Living) has grown out of work in the Loft with young people and families.

The recently restored village Memorial Hall built in memory of the sons of the Brooksbank family who were killed in the war provides a useful gathering point for community activities.



Hessay

St John the Baptist Church in Hessay was built with money collected by the villagers having had the land donated by a local farmer a couple of fields away from the main village. Before 1898 the Anglicans from Hessay walked to All Saints Church Moor Monkton to worship. St John the Baptist Church was built as a Chapel of Ease and is a red brick Victorian Church with a simple but beautiful interior with a central aisle, chancel and sanctuary with an adjoining vestry.

There is no electricity or heating in the Church although it does have a hand pumped organ which is a wonderful accompaniment to worship.

The Church sits in approximately 1 acre of land with the Hessay Churchyard Meadow having been managed to allow the wild flowers and wildlife to flourish. Originally the Churchyard was cut as a hay meadow and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust gave advice to encourage this practice in the 1980s. The seeds from the annual harvest are now used to establish new wild flower meadows. We are blessed with a haven for wildlife showing God's creation in full glory for many months of the year. A Church with a heart for God, for Conservation and the environment.

The local farmers and villagers had a Methodist Chapel built in Hessay around 1840. The Chapel has a service each month to which all are invited.

In 1988 (service held on Easter Day) a covenant was signed forming a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Anglicans and

Methodists from Hessay and Moor Monkton seeking the unity of Christ's Church in the villages, worshipping and working together. The Chapel has a history of many joint services, youth events, Tots groups, Messy Church, holiday clubs etc . Coffee and cake mornings have been held monthly for years and are ongoing. They are very much appreciated by the older members of the community. A Christmas lunch was provided post Covid to respond to the needs of the church family. The Chapel is used by the wider community for Parish Council meetings. The current Methodist Minister is Rev Elizabeth Cushion who lives in Poppleton.

This year we have work to do on both the Church and Chapel buildings following the Quinquennial Inspections, we are seeking village support with the hope that we will build community and there will be a growth in the Church family.

OTHER INFORMATION

Hessay is a quiet rural village with working farms, allotments, open public spaces with a warm and friendly community feel. The population is over 300. A bus travels through from Boroughbridge to York.



Moor Monkton

All Saints Church, Moor Monkton is a stone built 12th Century medieval Church and like Hessay is surrounded by fields, lying centrally between the different settlements of Moor Monkton.

The Church was restored in 1879 and has many interesting features including original Norman windows, stained glass windows, 17th century oak Altar Table and rail, old tombs etc. The ancient Churchyard is a peaceful rural retreat and in the spring the flowers are beautiful.

In 1988 during the service held on Easter Day where the Local Ecumenical Partnership was signed, we further pledged ourselves:

- to joint prayer and worship, not only for the unity of Christ's people but such as will provide for each tradition the opportunity to learn and value the spiritual glory of our Lord Jesus Christ
- to support each other in deepening and renewing our traditions for the enrichment of the life of the Church, and of the individual
- to develop common decision making
- to work as a team caring for the community
- to work together in ministry and pastoral care

These values have been at the heart of who we are.

We have worshipped together and developed services in different styles to suit the needs of the community as it evolves. We welcomed a group of young people with different ethnicities from South Africa as part of a Methodist/school exchange.

The Church reached out to the village during Covid and recognised and helped those in need.

This year we have work to do on the Church building following the Quinquennial Inspection and we are seeking village support with the hope that we will build community and growth in the Church especially with new families now moving into Moor Monkton.

OTHER INFORMATION

Moor Monkton is a small village with outlying farms. The population is approximately 350.

The Old School Room is managed by 'The Richard Kay Charity Trustees'. The Vicar is the Chair of the Trustees along with 2 Churchwardens and 2 co-opted trustees from the village. The Old Schoolroom (Village community space) is available for hire as well as being used by a thriving Tots group. Moor Monkton Gardening Club meet several times a year, The Parish Council hold their meetings in the hall and the Moor Monkton Village Association also holds events.



Wighill

All Saints is one of the three medieval churches in our Parish. There has been a church on this site since 1170 but the current building was re-ordered in 1912/13. It contains many interesting features including the Stapleton Monument which represents Robert Stapleton who was an MP and died in 1634 at the age of 33. The church is in a good state of repair and restoration work on the East Window was carried out following the last Quinquennial Inspection in 2018.

The village of Wighill has a varied population many of whom commute to work in nearby towns. In recent years there have been many changes to the village with old families moving out and new families moving in. In the past many families supported the church fund raising activities but did not attend services regularly, so there is a lot of scope for encouraging growth in the congregation.

Prior to the pandemic there were both traditional communion services and lay-led family services which we intend to re-introduce.

OTHER INFORMATION

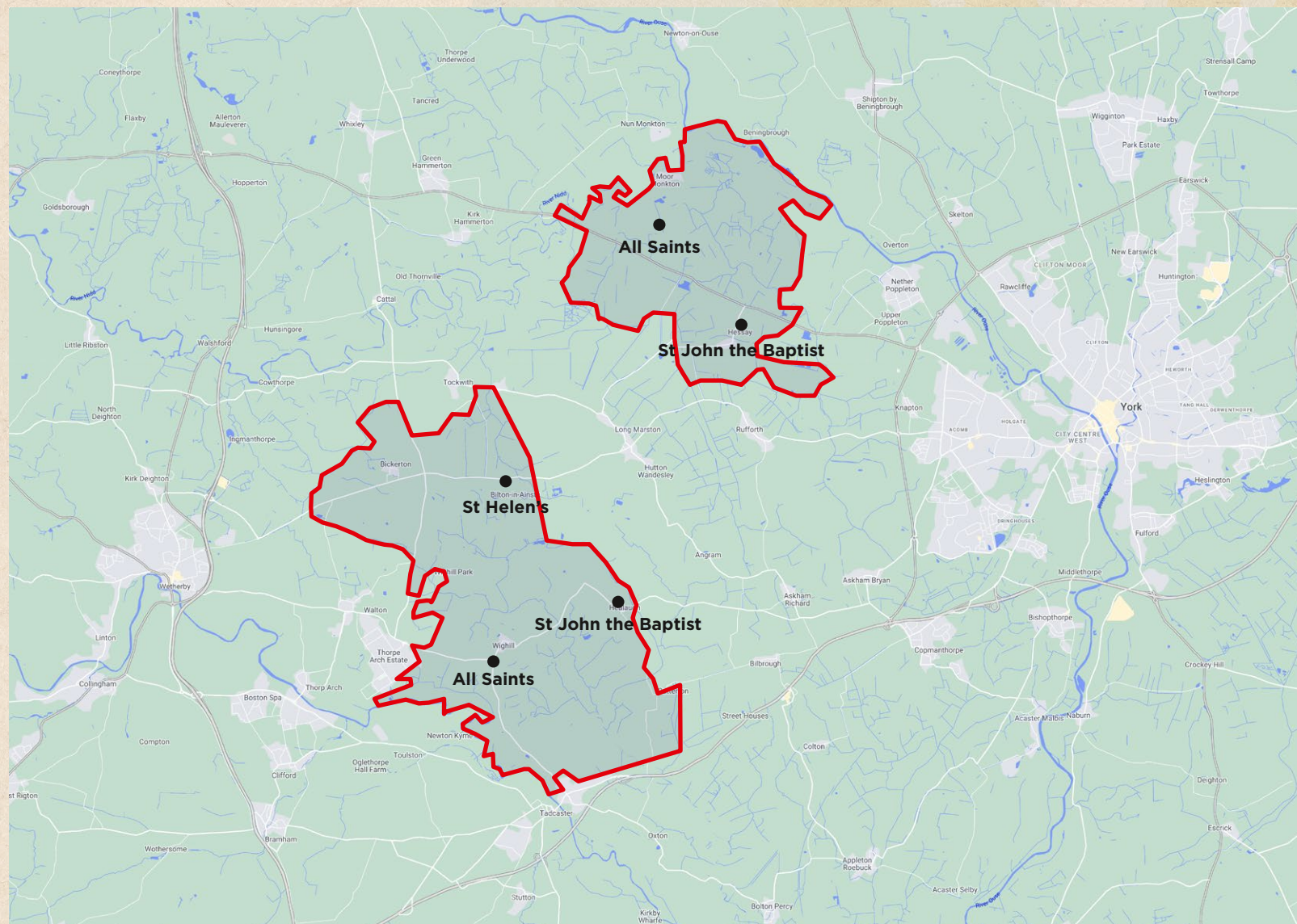
Wighill is a small village with outlying farms. Wighill has a population of approximately, 200.

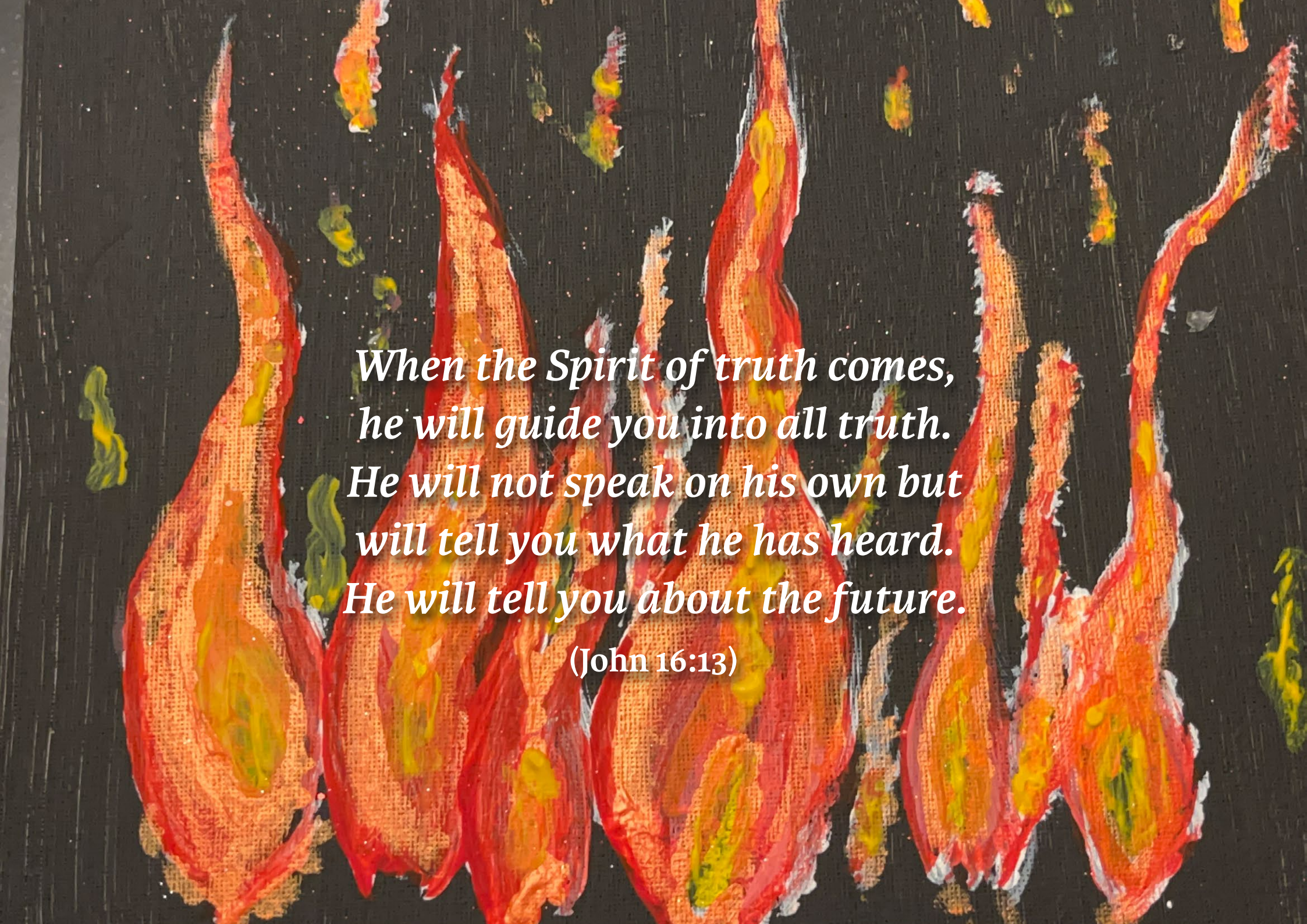
Priory Barn and Cottages is a wedding venue and many couples that choose to have their wedding reception here choose to marry at the church in Wighill.



Parish Map

The rather unusual configuration of the parish has come about as the result of historical developments in the placement of parish boundaries. Whilst it may look unusual in practice we have formed a homogenous and united church family under the blessing of one PCC. Meanwhile we work collectively and in harmony with our close neighbours in Marston Moor Parish, including through providing collective worship at the schools in Askham Richard and Long Marston.





*When the Spirit of truth comes,
he will guide you into all truth.
He will not speak on his own but
will tell you what he has heard.
He will tell you about the future.*

(John 16:13)