



DIOCESE OF  
LICHFIELD



**The Church of England**  
around Staffordshire, northern  
Shropshire and the Black Country



## Curacy in the Diocese of Lichfield

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**Title post in the  
benefice of  
Stone-with-Aston**



### Stone St Michael & St Wulfad

Town-centre church with a liberal  
Catholic spirituality, welcoming  
all-comers

### Aston St Saviour

Village 'middle CofE' church, small and  
friendly congregations with a big heart

# Welcome to Lichfield Diocese



**Come follow Christ  
in the footsteps of St Chad**

Cradled at the intersection of the Midlands and the North, and the interface between England and Wales, the Diocese of Lichfield is the ancient centre of Christianity in what was the Kingdom of Mercia.

We are rightfully grateful for the inheritance we have from St Chad that leads us to focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism as we live and serve among the communities of Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country.

Wherever in the Diocese you may be placed, you will benefit from being part of a wider family, mixing with people serving in a wide variety of contexts – from the grittiest inner-city neighbourhoods of Stoke and the Black Country, to the leafiest rural parishes of Staffordshire and

Shropshire, to the sparsest upland communities of the Staffordshire Moorlands and Welsh Borders.

And we embrace the widest spectrum of church traditions – evangelical and catholic, liberal and conservative, choral and charismatic, as we journey together – as a colleague recently put it, it is our goal to be a ‘spacious and gracious diocese’.

**‘...a spacious and  
gracious diocese.’**

It is my determination and that of my fellow-bishops that your calling to a title post will be a time of encouragement, ongoing formation, challenge and (while rarely unbridled) joy. Our colleagues among the Diocesan staff keenly bring their various specialisms both spiritual and practical to serve our parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies.

**+ Rt Revd Dr Michael Igrave**  
Bishop of Lichfield

**As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a Church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a Church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope. (Diocesan Vision Statement)**

## A caring diocese

Lichfield Diocese is one of the largest in the country, covering an area of 1744 square miles and serving a population of more than 2 million.

The Diocese consists of three episcopal areas with three Area Bishops (of Wolverhampton, Stafford and Shrewsbury) ministering alongside the Diocesan Bishop, each overseeing a different geographic area. This indicates the Diocese's commitment to its different contexts, and to the pastoral care of our clergy.

## Homes and schools

We aim to provide high quality housing for our clergy with a continuous programme of improvements to houses and responsive, specialist contractors for emergencies.

As well as the 208 Church of England schools in the Diocese, there are many good schools and colleges that will welcome clergy' children, and a number of

higher education centres can be found in Stoke, Keele, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

## Vocation and mission of all

Our vision for the Diocese is that all people, lay and ordained alike, will grow ever more deeply into their vocation as disciples of Christ. We hope to become a Church where all our members are equipped to know they are called by God to

worship and to be the eyes, hands, feet and mouth of Christ in their own contexts.

To further these aims, and to develop creative patterns of ministry, we ask all training parishes to offer 'sixth-day' opportunities for curates – which might be a chaplaincy attachment (school, hospital, prison or

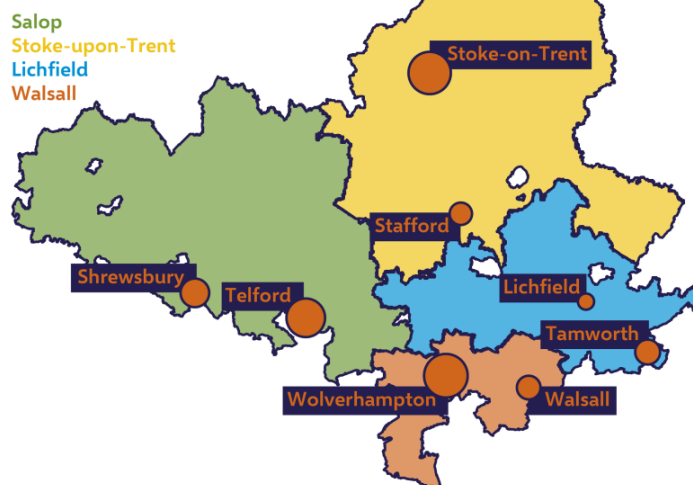
hospice), involvement with local gardening ventures, night-shelter involvement – to mention just a few possibilities.



"Our time as a family in my curacy in rural Shropshire has been one of the best of our lives. I've learned that the priestly role is vital in the community. I'm particularly enjoying working with seniors, and enabling the giftings of others which resulted in a successful Messy Church starting in one of the villages. I give thanks to God for this special time, and for everyone who's been there for me and supported me throughout."

Revd Jassica Castillo-Burley

### The Archdeaconries of Lichfield Diocese





# Everything but the sea



David Rayner (Wikipedia) / Stoke-on-Trent Bottle Kiln / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Staffordshire prides itself on being 'the Creative County': Shropshire is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and the Black Country is renowned for its industry and all have significant opportunities for spouses who wish to develop careers in any sphere.

For those days off when you need space away from the parish, the area has everything you could wish for – except the sea: wild landscapes, cultured museums and stately homes. Sports of many kinds (including Premiership football) and at least two theme parks

*Shrewsbury Flax Mill – the prototype skyscraper* / Tk420 (Wikipedia) / [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)



Opening of the Lighthouse Project at Kingsland CE Academy, Bucknall



## Road and rail links



For those with family and friends in other parts of the country, the Diocese has great transport links: the M6/M6Toll bisects the centre of the Diocese north-south, and the M5 originates at our southern tip. Heading west, the A5/M54 give easy access to north and mid Wales, while the A50, A5 and M6Toll give swift access to the M1, M42 and A38 for the East Midlands and the south-east.

Rail links are also good with all major towns having direct services to London and Birmingham and four major airports surround our borders – Birmingham, East Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool.



*Dovedale (location of one of the Diocese's two residential retreat centres) / Shaun Dunmall (wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 2.0*

## Leisure and pleasure

Lichfield Diocese has everything but the sea. For walkers and climbers, there's an extensive network of canals, Cannock Chase, The Roaches, and the Shropshire—Welsh borders (for example). If you're into more organised fun, Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Theme Park can provide it. And then there's

*Wightwick Manor nr Wolverhampton / Tony Hisgett (Wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 4.0*



many museums including Walsall's New Art Gallery and the RAF museum at Cosford; not to mention excellent sporting options for both watching and participating – from premiership football to the Tamworth Snowdome. Along with Wedgwood, theatres and cinemas, restaurants and superb tea shops just begging to be discovered...



*Apedale Valley Light Railway nr Stoke is one of many transport and leisure museums in the Diocese / Simon Jones*

If shopping is your thing, there is a range of options, from the chic boutiques at Barton Marina, and Shrewsbury to large malls in or near the urban centres. We're fortunate in being the home of many fine ales and beers brewed in Burton on Trent (the museum is well worth a visit), and Staffordshire oatcakes are a unique local delicacy to be discovered.



*Wulfrun Centre in Wolverhampton is one of many shopping destinations in the region © Roger Kidd -/ [geograph.org.uk/p/1171894/](http://geograph.org.uk/p/1171894/) CC BY 2.0*

*Alton Towers near Uttoxeter Jeremy Thompson/Flickr / CC BY 2.0*





# The Benefice of Stone with Aston



Stone is a fair sized Market town that lies between Stafford and Stoke on Trent. Although it is in Stafford Borough, it holds a proud identity of its own and used to have staple industries of shoe making and brewing.

Neither of these exist today, but the town has a lively atmosphere, a wonderful monthly Farmers Market and annual town Festivals.

Although a cursory glance would make Stone seem prosperous and comfortable, the town is a microcosm of modern society, with all the pluses and minuses that represents. There is a "bit of everything" in the town's population.

## Services in the churches:

St Michael and St Wulfad has a liberal Catholic flavour. The Church spirituality centres upon the celebration of the Eucharist, though this is by no means the whole story. We host Civic services twice each year and have excellent relations with local schools, including St Michael's First school. The PCC regularly reviews the Mission Action plan and participates in Messy Church, Café Church and the like. A recent Wedding Fair was also held as part of the plan.



The smaller parish of Aston St Saviour has been with St M&W for nearly 100 years. The Spirituality is more "Middle Anglican" and services can be held from the Book of Common Prayer, including Matins, held monthly. The PCC is also active and participates in many of the activities with St Michael & St Wulfad.

## Sundays in St Michael & St Wulfad

8am	BCP Communion each Sunday. 15-20 worshippers, who are very faithful
10.45am	Family Communion from Common worship. We have an active Choir and Sunday School runs during the service

## Aston St Saviour at 9.15am each week

1 <sup>st</sup>	Matins
2 <sup>nd</sup>	BCP Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Common Worship Communion
4 <sup>th</sup>	BCP Communion
5 <sup>th</sup>	Common Worship Communion

- On Mondays the Parishes run a "Faith Matters" group in a sheltered housing complex, with about 20 worshippers.
- On Tuesdays in St Michael's Hall there is a "Drop Inn" lunch – soup and sandwiches each week during term time.
- Wednesdays at 3.30pm a Christian after school club at St Michael's school.
- Every other month – Messy Church in St Michael's hall.

St Michael and St Wulfad's is an imposing building that seats 700 at a pinch! It dates from 1758, although there have been at least 3 Churches on the site. The site was formally occupied by a Cistercian abbey and revered as the place where St Wulfad was martyred. On the whole it is in good repair, though as with all churches, there are constant challenges to be met. The Parish is rapidly expanding with new building and is currently thought to be about 11,000 strong.

St Saviour's Aston was built by the local gentry in 1846. The family later converted to Roman Catholicism(!) and the Parish only ever had one Vicar of its own. Nevertheless the congregation is an active one and the parish now comprises about 3,000 souls.

## Your Training Incumbent

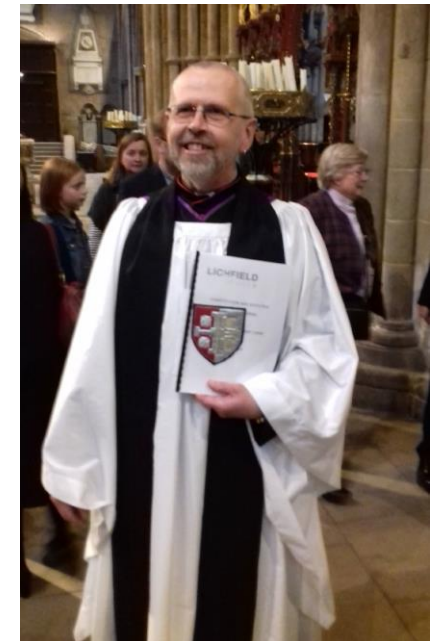
### Revd Prebendary Ian Cardinal

Stone Rectory, 11 Farrier Close, Stone. ST15 8XP

- Trained: Queen's College, Birmingham
- Ordained: 1984, Ripon Diocese as was
- Curacy: Whitkirk, St Mary, Leeds and then Knaresborough Parish
- Rev'd John Cotterill, SSM. Rev'd Alison Hudson SSM Curate, Readers Mr Dennis Abbott and Mrs Lin Davies

I have been Ordained nearly 36 years, and have served 3 Incumbencies and 2 Curacies – in Ripon, Lincoln and Lichfield Dioceses. Before Ordination I worked at British Leyland, becoming a Union representative and Branch Secretary. I have had a long experience in local Ministry and encouraging the ministry of others.

Having colleagues should always be fun! Our team shares in a lot of laughter at our meetings, as well as trying to explore God's Mission in our context.



# The Benefice of Stone with Aston

## The Context

Stone is a great place in which to work and learn. Although major industry has largely moved out, there is still a small industrial estate – and housing is expanding rapidly. There are four schools in the parish, and former Curates have been welcomed as a Governor at some of our local schools. Situated in the Trent valley, Stone has a proud history, including being the birthplace of the Trent and Mersey canal. The town generally is growing towards the 20,000 head of population and there are the usual challenges of reaching out towards new housing estates.

up to 130-140 pastoral offices a year, largely in baptisms and weddings! This is a wonderful spot in which to “cut your teeth”.

Team Ministry is the name of the game here and we have an active Ministry team of the formally licensed – 2 Readers and 3 Priests, currently.

The PCCs have been active in their support of the ministry of women over a considerable period of time.

Our Mission Action plan is regularly reviewed by the PCCs and a recent activity has been to launch a successful Wedding Fair. (Currently we celebrate up to 15 weddings each year).

As the newly Ordained find their feet, we encourage them to think through a project for which they could take responsibility: recent examples have been a monthly healing and meditation service, and also Café Church.

Regular activities during the week include a group called “Faith Matters” which meets on Mondays. This is in a sheltered housing complex and comprises 21 elderly folk for whom this is Church. Tuesday lunchtimes sees the “Drop Inn café” where people meet for soup and a sandwich lunch. This is a valued opportunity for pastoral contacts.

The Congregation in numbers:		
Figures from 2019	Stone	Aston
Electoral Roll	112	70
ASA	69 Adult 5 Children	32 Adult 2 Child
Marriages	6	6
Funerals	38	6
Baptism	28	8
Messy Church	21 Adults 32 Children	Shared

## The Ministry

Church is still important in the local Community and there are big events in which we are called to play our part. The parish can see



Wednesday afternoons see us at St Michael's school where there is a faith based after school club.

All these have a team of active volunteers from the two churches, as we encourage the every member ministry in our parishes.

Thursday morning Communion includes regular visits from St Michael's school, when the weekly service includes a more visual talk.



## Housing and Accommodation

The Diocese of Lichfield either has a curate's house in the benefice or a strategic house for curates in close proximity of the benefice. These are good houses, mainly with four bedrooms. If there is no curate's house in the benefice and where such a strategic property exists within easy reach of the proposed training parish this will be the preferred curate's house. If there is no strategic housing available nearby the diocese is committed to providing appropriate accommodation for all those entering ministry. We generally do not offer rented accommodation except as an emergency short term measure. Our curates can be confident that their home will be of a consistently high standard. Please contact the DDO for further information.

We're really grateful for all the support we got from the Diocese, starting with the DDO, who went out of her way to help in finding a good match, and to work out practical matters.

My vicar has been very supportive, through planning carefully together and weekly supervisions, where we reflect on different areas of ministry. I have been given new challenges progressively, all done sensitively and fitted to the stage I was at. Our churches have been so welcoming to the whole family, and very supportive of my ministry, even when this involves less regular ideas, like planting a tree during a sermon (only in a pot, I regret to say!).

Revd John Beswick Pallister

# Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

## Supporting learning and formation

Curate learning, formation and development is strongly valued and affirmed in Lichfield Diocese. Curates receive ongoing supervision and reflection on ministry in the parish, complemented by our curate-training programme in which you share with your year-group of peers. The aim of the training programme is to enable each person to flourish in their ministry and inhabit more deeply their vocation as deacons and priests. This programme supports learning and formation through a partnership between the Diocese and The Queen's Foundation. And it takes place in the context of parish supervision and reflection on ministry.

The programme provides space and an environment beyond the parish context in which curates come together with skilled tutors to learn with and from each other's shared experience, so that they can better integrate their practice and reflection, develop their personal qualities, spiritual, ministerial and professional gifts and skills, and deepen their desire to learn.



*The curacy experience is very much a collective one, often gathering at Lichfield Diocese's centrally-located Shallowford House for study, prayer, retreat and de-stressing with peers: as such, it's a much less scary venue during IME2 than as a base for a BAP!*

## Pattern of training

The programme focuses on grounded and situated learning and prioritises the Diocese's focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism:

- In Year 1 establishing you in your new ministerial context and practice, and supporting your preparation for ordination as priest.
- In Year 2, deepening your practice and understanding of mission and ministry with the theological tools and skills you need to contextualise this.
- In Year 3 helping you prepare for life-long ministry and to take up a post of responsibility to be entered into with skill and confidence.



# IME2 to equip for ministry

At the heart of the programme are residential events which bring together a year-group of curates. They reflect the diversity of the Church, while the different ministry contexts reflect the diversity of the Diocese. This cohort is the primary context for the essential learning and formation to develop your ministries, focusing on ministerial formation, and on the development of relationships which enable mutual flourishing for all.

## Opportunities for academic awards

Alongside the IME2 training you may wish to continue studying on an accredited pathway with Common Awards. Curates who already have a Diploma award from IME1 may register for a BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Others who already have a degree or higher award or are recognised as potential theological educators have opportunities to further their studies alongside their curate programme.



Many second year curates have the opportunity to grow through visits to our link dioceses in Canada, Africa, or Germany– this group enjoying a day on safari.

## Care for curates and families

The wellbeing of clergy and their families is very important to us. In addition to the supervisory aspects to curacy, we have a free, confidential counselling service (*the Listening Ear* scheme) for all clergy, diocesan staff and their families.

## More info

– contact the DDO (details on back cover) or visit [Lichfield.anglican.org/curacy](http://Lichfield.anglican.org/curacy)

"We have had amazing support from the diocese over the past 6 years through both of our curacies and that's not always been straightforward- particularly when 'life' sometimes gets in the way!

"But the support, through thick and thin has been fantastic, particularly discerning Adam's call to pioneering ministry and curacy under 'pioneer' supervision."

Revds Adam & Charlotte Gompertz





# Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

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## For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

**The Revd Romita Shrisunder,**

Bishops' Director of Ordinands

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07949 033091 [M]

E-mail: [romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org)

## Find us on:

### AChurchNearYou:

Stone St Michael, & St Wulfad

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/3522/>

Aston St Saviour

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4519/>

### Website:

<http://www.stmichaelschurchstone.co.uk>

### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/171723922860667/?ref=bookmarks>

<https://www.facebook.com/stsaviouraston/>

### Twitter:

[@rectorstone](https://twitter.com/rectorstone)

## St Michael & St Wulfad Stone

*welcoming all comers*

**A canal town with a church at the  
heart**

## St Saviour Aston-by-Stone

*A village church that welcomes all*