

Benefice (Family Group) of Longnor

The Church Family of Longnor, with
Newtown, Quarnford and Sheen



Our Mission Statement:

We believe that the door to salvation is always open and so are the doors to our churches. We strive to show God's love and concern for his creation at every opportunity. Through works of charity and opening our doors to listen and love, we feel that we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.



Welcome to the Alstonefield Deanery Mission Area Team

Thank you for your interest in the post of **full-time Priest in Charge** of St Bartholomew's, Longnor with St Paul's, Newtown; St Paul's, Quarnford and St Luke's, Sheen. Together we make up the Longnor Family of Churches. The benefice includes Warslow with Elkstones but they are supported by the Ipstones Family Group.

Our vacancy represents a new and exciting opportunity to join a fledgling Mission Area Team meaning you can work:

- At breadth, collaboratively and collegiately across Alstonefield Deanery - an area of the geographical size of Liverpool, and a total population of under 6,000 people and 18 churches in the beautiful countryside of the Staffordshire Moorlands
- and concurrently at depth with independence and autonomy to lead and develop faith in the rural parishes of the Longnor Family.

Why consider us?

- We offer an innovative and supportive environment
- you'll be a key member of the Deanery Mission Area Team, working collegiately and co-operatively across the Mission Area - giving and receiving support from colleagues across four family groups
- The parishes offer opportunities to be a visible, valued and welcome 'face of ministry' within our close-knit, supportive village and farming communities
- Active and dedicated congregations
- Enthusiastic lay members who lead services, support worship and develop our community outreach
- Well established links with our two primary schools and opportunities to develop mission and ministry with children and families
- Our churches are located in peaceful and safe village environments, ideal for those who enjoy rural living with a strong sense of tradition.

Our church teams in the Longnor Family offer dedicated service, dependability, creativity and enthusiasm, warm friendship and laughter—and, as excellent bakers, a plentiful supply of cake! You'll find we are down-to-earth, practical and pragmatic, as well as kind, compassionate and consistently supportive.

We want you to love your life here, bringing your positive energy as you become woven into our rural communities, forming genuine connections with the wonderful people who live here and offering a joyful, relatable presence in our villages, shops, schools, farms, and places of worship.

What we would like you to do:

We are looking for a vicar who will work with us to address our shared opportunities and challenges with creativity, prayerfulness, and steady leadership. We hope you will:

- **Help us grow in faith**, encouraging discipleship across all ages and stages, and supporting us as we explore new ways to deepen our spiritual life together.
- **Lead us in developing innovative approaches to providing welcome and connection**, particularly with families, young people, and those in our villages whom we do not yet reach.
- **Broaden the church's presence and support within our communities**, ensuring that older residents, isolated individuals, and those seeking companionship or pastoral care feel noticed, valued, and included.
- **Strengthen and extend our partnerships with our local primary schools and community groups**, helping to revive shared activities, create new opportunities for engagement, and nurture our place at the heart of village life.
- **Support our PCCs in securing the financial resources needed** to care for our historic buildings and meet our parish share commitments, offering guidance and encouragement as we plan sustainably for the future.
- **Serve as Mission Area Lead for ministry among the farming community**, building relationships, understanding rural challenges, and shaping mission that reflects the realities of agricultural life.
- **Serve as Mission Area Lead for mission with visiting tourists**, helping us offer hospitality, interpretation, and welcome that reflect our Christian identity and the beauty of our heritage.
- **Support the Mission Area Team** by working collaboratively across the 14 other mission area churches taking on the role of Assistant Curate and contributing to the shared life of the wider Area.

Ideally, you will be:

- A **community-minded priest** who is visible and approachable, building strong relationships with local people, organisations, civic partners, the family group and the Mission Area Team.
- A **gifted preacher** and teacher who communicates the Gospel clearly and engagingly across all ages and backgrounds.
- An **effective communicator** in person, in writing, and online, confident in using digital media to support church life and outreach.
- **Well-organised and skilled in administration and governance**, working constructively with PCCs, churchwardens, and the wider deanery and diocese.
- A **supportive, emotionally aware leader** who encourages teamwork, delegates wisely, and helps others grow in their gifts.
- **Pastoral, confident and ready to offer care** during times of personal difficulty, ill health or bereavement.
- A **collaborative, people-oriented and resilient team player** who can balance priorities and respond to varied demands.
- Someone **energised by the opportunities of team ministry** and the richness of a rural context for growing faith.

And you will be:

- **Outward-looking, open and welcoming**, fostering a church community where everyone feels safe and at home.
- **Friendly and approachable**, able to connect with the farming community, children, young people and families.
- **Mature in faith and approach**, whatever your age.

Quote from congregation member of St Bartholomew's: *'I would like a vicar who would be part of our wider community and not just the church. Someone who will share the good news of God in an accessible way which can be understood by everyone, no matter their level of faith.'*

Four Churches, Three Parishes, Two Schools, One Family in the Staffordshire Moorlands

The Longnor Churches Family is located on the western edge of the Peak Park in the 'South-West Peak'. Characterised by dispersed farmsteads, species-rich meadows, and fast-flowing streams, this is a working countryside shaped by centuries of livestock farming and traditional field patterns.

Our churches have a shared Anglican tradition rooted in liturgical reverence, pastoral care, and community engagement. Worship across the Family is in the Common Worship tradition plus seasonal observances, and creative outreach such as Wild Church, Prayer Shawl Ministry, and Open the Book. The ministry is shaped by a commitment to sacramental life, offering both continuity and adaptability in response to local needs.

The churches are deeply embedded in village life, offering pastoral care and participating in local events. We place a strong emphasis on our vicar being a visible presence in the community, *"reminding them about God and reminding God about them"*. (the late Fr John Baines)

The primary schools are small and nurturing; they provide values-led education grounded in the Christian ethos, which is woven throughout the curriculum.

You will be supported by three worship leaders:

- All churches: Priest with Permission to Officiate
- All churches: Locally Commissioned Lay Funeral Minister
- Longnor, Sheen and Newtown: Locally Commissioned Lay Minister

'I particularly like the feeling of community in the rural parishes. Every parish has their own quirks and unique identities.' (Revd Nicola, Priest with PtO)

The Challenge

We face a set of shared challenges in moving forward as a rural Family Group:

- Helping people grow in faith by offering welcoming, thoughtful support that deepens understanding, nurtures prayer and worship, encourages belonging, and equips individuals to live out Christian discipleship in everyday life.
- We want to try new and innovative ways to welcome and connect with families, young people, and others in our community who are not currently reached through our usual church activities and services.
- We want to broaden the reach of the church so that more people feel supported by us, especially older residents and those who feel isolated and lonely.
- We want to continue to build strong links with our local primary schools and community groups, helping to revive shared activities and deepen our ties within the wider community.
- A key challenge is securing enough financial resources to care for our church buildings and meet our parish share commitments across our churches without it dominating our ministry and mission.
- We recognise that a key challenge for you (and us) is working collaboratively and collectively across the whole Deanery in balance with nurturing your primary church communities

'Everyone in the village is part of my flock, whether or not they come to church' (the Late Fr John Baines)

Your Life in Our Rural Communities

Community & People

- Our villages are warm, close-knit communities where neighbours know and support each other.
- Parishioners are friendly and welcoming, keen to work alongside and support their vicar.
- The villages offer opportunities to be a visible and valued presence within village life.

Setting & Lifestyle

- We are located in stunning countryside, with easy access to walking routes, moorland views, and riverside paths.
- Our villages are peaceful and safe environments, ideal for those who enjoy quiet, rural living with a strong sense of tradition.
- The villages have their own character and charm, while nearby market towns add further variety.

Facilities & Amenities

- The villages have a variety of facilities and amenities including pubs, village halls, post offices, which serve as hubs of local life.
- There is a good sense of community involvement, with clubs, activities, and social gatherings.
- The parish benefits from good local schools in the surrounding area, including church schools.



A Heart for Mission

Through the commitment and help of our lay and volunteer helpers, we reach out to our community in a number of ways:

Open the Book: A small team of volunteers organises and runs Open the Book every fortnight at our primary schools in Longnor and Hollinsclough. We have good relationships with our school teams and the children and volunteers alike have a

lot of fun bringing stories from scripture to life using scripts, props and costumes.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Formed only eight months ago, our small Prayer Shawl Ministry group has enthusiastically embraced this compassionate form of outreach, in which members meet together fortnightly to knit or crochet woollen shawls, each one prayerfully crafted to offer comfort, healing, and spiritual support. Shawls are blessed and then gifted to community members who are experiencing illness, grief, or life transitions, serving as tangible expressions of care and prayer by our churches. The group has even sourced and processed its own fleeces, making the shawls all the more joyous and precious.

Communication:

Our villages are small and locally much communication is by word of mouth. As a Family Group we set store by good communication with our communities. We have:

- Our Family Group's Parish Magazine - a dedicated team of volunteers edit, print, collate and distribute a monthly parish magazine. We currently distribute 260 printed copies and 53 electronic copies.
- The Longnor Churches Facebook Page - we have a regularly updated Facebook page which we use to send out news and promote special services and events. We hope you will use social media to grow our community engagement.
- The Longnor Churches website - our website is hosted and run by a volunteer and is regularly updated with details of services and photographs of events.
- A Church Near You - we are fortunate to have a proactive volunteer who keeps our Church Near You pages fresh and up-to-date.

Your Home - Longnor Vicarage

The vicarage is at the western edge of Longnor village and is accessed via a quiet single-track lane/public footpath. It was built in the early 1990's and is a modern, well-maintained home. Downstairs there is a study, dining room, sitting room, kitchen, utility room and loo. Upstairs there are 4 bedrooms, a bathroom and loo. It is south-facing and offers privacy and ample space for family living - both indoors and outdoors. There is a garage, outdoor store and parking area. From the front there is a spectacular uninterrupted view across farmland to the River Manifold and beyond. From here it is only a short walk to St Bartholomew's Church, the primary school and the village market place.

Village Life: Longnor, Flash and Sheen

Our villages bring together long-established families and those who have chosen to make their home here from elsewhere. They are friendly, supportive communities where people take an interest in one another and value neighbourliness.

The things that are important in our villages include:

- Small generational family farms; Dairy, sheep and beef farming
- The rhythm of life through lambing, silaging, haymaking and autumn sheep sales.
- The farming community; full of resilience, independence and practical wisdom—often with a wry sense of humour.
- The pace of life; slower, more interdependent
- The opportunities to participate in community life beyond the church
- Tourism; **Longnor** is a popular base for walkers
- As the highest village in Britain, **Flash** is no stranger to dramatic weather
- It is a small, resilient community of stone cottages, farms and barns, with an active village hall, a pub, a popular pony-trekking centre and a nearby café.
- **Sheen**, with around 230 residents, has about 20 farms—seven along the main street—and roughly 90 houses. The former village school now serves as the village hall beside the church, hosting church events, community meals, craft groups, whist drives and the weekly Post Office

Longnor Parish and St Bartholomew's Church

'I value that we are a friendly and inclusive community that offers a place to come together and engage in joyful worship. Our's is a church which is filled with warmth and laughter.'

(Congregation member, St Bartholomew's)

Longnor is a small village and civil parish in the Staffordshire Moorlands district of Staffordshire. It had a population of 334 at the 2021 census.

The first church on the site dates to around 1223, though the present building is of later origin and features an impressive Norman font, a 19th-century pulpit, and a contemporary sculpture of St Bertram, with its gallery ('balcony room') now used as a meeting space. We are fortunate to have kitchens on both the ground and first floor and a ground floor toilet, making the church a useful community facility and a valued partner in village events of all kinds. The church building is in good condition.

The church has a small but dedicated congregation for its regular fortnightly services, with larger gatherings at key times of the year such as Christmas, Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest Festival, and the Wakes Week Well Blessing service in September. The parish benefits from active lay readers and an organist, while close links with the village school bring children into the church for several school-time activities during the year.

Fundraising is key to our church, with funds raised through coffee mornings, an Autumn Fair, a harvest sale, and an annual flower festival in July, and we also benefit from fundraising activities organised by Longnor Action Group. The PCC is made up of passionate, capable, organised and committed members who bring a wide range of practical, organisational, and administrative skills, ensuring that the church continues to run smoothly and play a central role in village life.



The church has a generous legacy from a former benefactor, which provides vital support for major repairs and maintenance. The day-to-day running costs of the church are met through a range of well-supported fundraising activities, including our popular coffee mornings, Flower Festival, Autumn Fair, and Band Concert. These events not only help to sustain our finances but also bring the community together, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere within the church. In addition, we are supported by regular donations and offerings from the collection plate during services. Thanks to this generosity and commitment, we have been able to meet our annual parish share in full each year.

'Being a worship leader is an important part of my life. It's a privilege to be able to join with all our church communities to worship the Lord, and to be part of a team that is growing discipleship and mission in the area' (Sharon leads services at Longnor, Sheen and Newtown).

'I appreciate the friendliness of the community and the events that happen throughout the year. Everyone works together during these events.' (Congregation member, St Bartholomew's)

While Longnor was an important and lively market village in the 18th and 19th centuries, positioned on a major crossroads and hosting regular fairs and markets, it has not grown

since Victorian times and today it experiences similar demographic and housing challenges to many others in the Peak District:

- high property prices and a diminishing population
- a noticeable increase in the number of second homes and properties bought up for Airbnb purposes.

Despite this, Longnor retains a strong sense of local identity: It has

- an active Action Group, which organises community events, secures grant funding, and supports improvements to the village.
- The pub, village shop, post office, fish & chip shop, and two cafés continue to serve as key social and community focal points, helping to sustain the welcoming and vibrant spirit of Longnor.

The village has much to offer its residents.



St Paul's Church, Newtown



A small church with a big heart - and fantastic views!

St Paul's is situated within the hamlet of Newtown, near the edge of the moors and at the head of a valley with a view across to Reapsmoor, Sheen and Hartington (once described by a visiting Bishop of Lichfield as 'probably the best view in the Diocese'). The small, but faithful congregation - and a wider group of supporters that helps to care for the church and joins us for special services, drawn from the surrounding community of scattered upland farms and dwellings. The church is the only community gathering place in Newtown.

Currently it holds a service of Morning Prayer at 10.00am on the first and third Thursdays of each month, and Holy Communion takes place twice a month on Sundays at 9.30am.

The church hosts a number of well-loved special services throughout the year, including a Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, a Flower Service in mid-August, and a Harvest Festival in mid-September. On Christmas Eve we gather for a well-supported evening Carol Service, followed by a convivial 'bring and share' supper.

The building was originally erected in 1837 by Sir George Crewe, the eighth Baronet of Calke Abbey. Its most recent restoration took place in 2001, adding a kitchenette, toilet and hearing loop. Following the 2024 Quinquennial Inspection, some refurbishment work is required in 2026.

Like St Bartholomew's, St Paul's, Newtown is fortunate to have a legacy from the Harpur-Crewe family. We rely on this to cover costs relating to maintenance and refurbishment of the building. We currently meet our regular running costs through funds generated by collections, donations and two fundraising events each year, a Cheese & Wine evening in August and our Harvest Sale in September. We make a 15% contribution to St Bartholomew's parish share, which we have been able to meet for the past few years.

'I value belonging to a loving, strong community of regular worshippers, which is very reassuring especially in times of need' (Congregation member, St Paul's)

Quarnford Parish and St Paul's Church

Ministry on top of the world!



The parish of Quarnford is at the Staffordshire corner of Three Shires Head, the point, marked by a packhorse bridge, where the counties of Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire meet. Quarnford's landscape is characterised by high open moorland and upland farming. It is dotted with small settlements and scattered farms and is steeped in folklore. A notable place is Lud's Church, a natural ravine which is reputed to have been a hiding place of Robin Hood and the site of the

Green Chapel in the Arthurian Legend Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

Situated in the village of Flash, Quarnford's only village, the highest in Great Britain, St Paul's is the highest church in the country at 463 metres (1518 feet) above sea level.

The church team is friendly, kind and supportive. It has a small but faithful congregation, an excellent organist, and use Common Worship, and sometimes the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, for worship.

The church is firmly embedded within the small community and shares annual celebrations with the nearby village hall, the highlight of the year being the Rose Queen event in May. The annual church flower festival is in June, created by a dedicated team of supporters, including Flash's Tea & Tots Group which meets monthly at the village hall.

Financially the Church has a limited income and limited reserves. A financial review is underway with the new PCC Treasurer in post. However, to date we have always met our share of the Diocesan Common Fund and intend to continue to do so. We have potential to grow slightly as the Deanery focusses on some of its strategic objectives as part of Seeking the Kingdom.

The parish is strongly supported by Karen, who has lived in Flash all her life and is a locally commissioned lay funeral minister: "*I'm just a farmer who does funerals*".

'St Paul's is very much in my heart. Great-grandad helped to build it and the family has been involved ever since' (a congregation member)

Sheen Parish and St Luke's Church

Sheen has a small loyal congregation meeting in St Luke's, a church that was rebuilt in 1851. It seats about 150 and is in good repair, with impressive stained glass windows, a fine oak carved screen and reredos made of alabaster and local marble. The tower houses an automated church clock and a good ring of six bells.

Longnor Benefice books based on Common Worship are used for most services. A CD-based music system is used to lead singing from Hymns Old and New whilst an organist from the benefice plays for special services through the year including Flower Festival, Wakes Week, Christmas Eve carols and Harvest - and occasional Wild Church services. The electoral role increased slightly to 15 this year, although special services attract many more, including 150 at the Christmas Crib Service.

The surrounding churchyard is well maintained, open for new internments and visited regularly by families.

The church meets its annual costs, including the common fund, by a combination of regular giving, collections and village fundraising events such as a monthly whist drive and 100 Club draw, and annual events including a Flower Festival and Wakes celebrations, including coffee morning and raffle. These events also provide contact with members of the local community throughout the year and reflect the warm welcome (and tea and biscuits) at church services. Funds from a number of legacies are available to pay for major maintenance to the church building, which is in a good state of repair. We are proud to say that our Parish share has always been paid in full each year.

St Luke's is the home of Wild Church and a group of volunteers runs regular sessions to encourage our young ones to discover God through nature—listening to stories, taking part in nature-inspired craft activities and generally enjoying the outdoors in our beautiful churchyard. It's a gentle, playful way to pray, wonder, and feel close to God in the fresh Sheen air!

