



PARISH PROFILE



From the Archdeacon of Totnes

At the heart of the English Riviera, the parish of Cockington extends from the Torbay sea-front with its wide views across the Bay up to beautiful, historic Cockington Park. During the current vacancy, the churches in Cockington and Chelston have been working hard to raise their profile in the parish, building new relationships with residents and visitors and with people seeking the occasional offices, those who live in local care homes, and those who teach and learn in local schools. Their stated aim has been 'to share the love of God and the peace of Christ' in new and varied ways, and as they do so they are experiencing growth in the number of people choosing to worship with them.

This clear missional energy is focused especially on three groups which align closely with three of our current areas of focus in the Diocese of Exeter as a whole: children and families, people on the fringes of church life, and older people. In Cockington and Chelston, the approach to Christian mission is above all through pastoral care, sacramental public worship, and the occasional offices. Accordingly, the parish needs a priest who will be a leader of mission in pastoral and sacramental mode and will equip the church communities for the work of ministry through his or her teaching, encouragement, and oversight.

Cockington is part of the West Torquay Mission Community together with the parish of St John the Baptist, Shiphay Collaton. An important aspect of the new priest's work will be supporting and encouraging the development of that relationship alongside the neighbouring incumbent. Collegiality and teamwork both within and beyond the parish of Cockington will be essential.

The Diocese of Exeter is a good place to be in ministry. In our mission communities we continue to develop a diocesan vision which we pray will help us to be more fruitful branches of Christ the vine—growing in prayer, making new disciples, and serving the people of Devon with joy. Please read more about our aims and values here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy/vision-next-steps-2021>

Thank you for visiting the website and reading this profile, and may God bless you as you discern whether you may be called to a ministry in the parish of Cockington.

Douglas Dettmer

ADT@exeter.anglican.org

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Church family celebrating centuries of worship. We have a strong desire to be relevant in today's world. Our mission is to bring people of all ages to God through sharing the love of God and the peace of Christ.

Welcome to Cockington

Thank you for reading this and taking the time to consider our parish.

We have been praying on a weekly basis for our new incumbent, whoever you may be.

Before we get to the facts and figures in our profile, we'd like to share with you a bit about us, what we're like, and what our hopes are. All good relationships have chemistry so you need to know about what makes us tick just as much as we would very much like to know more about you.

In a nutshell, we are a welcoming, collaborative bunch of activists. By that we mean we like to get things done. We may not be tender in years but we have a focus and energy that comes from caring deeply what happens to the community at large, our parish and its congregations and the beautiful buildings the care of which we have been entrusted for the next generation. What is important to us is that the love of God is spread within and without the church, and that means drawing people in as well as growing in faith together.

In the last year particularly, rather than turning inwards and being restricted by an interregnum, we have sought to nurture shoots of growth by engaging in several new initiatives, reaching out to groups and creating relationships which we hope will become increasingly fruitful.

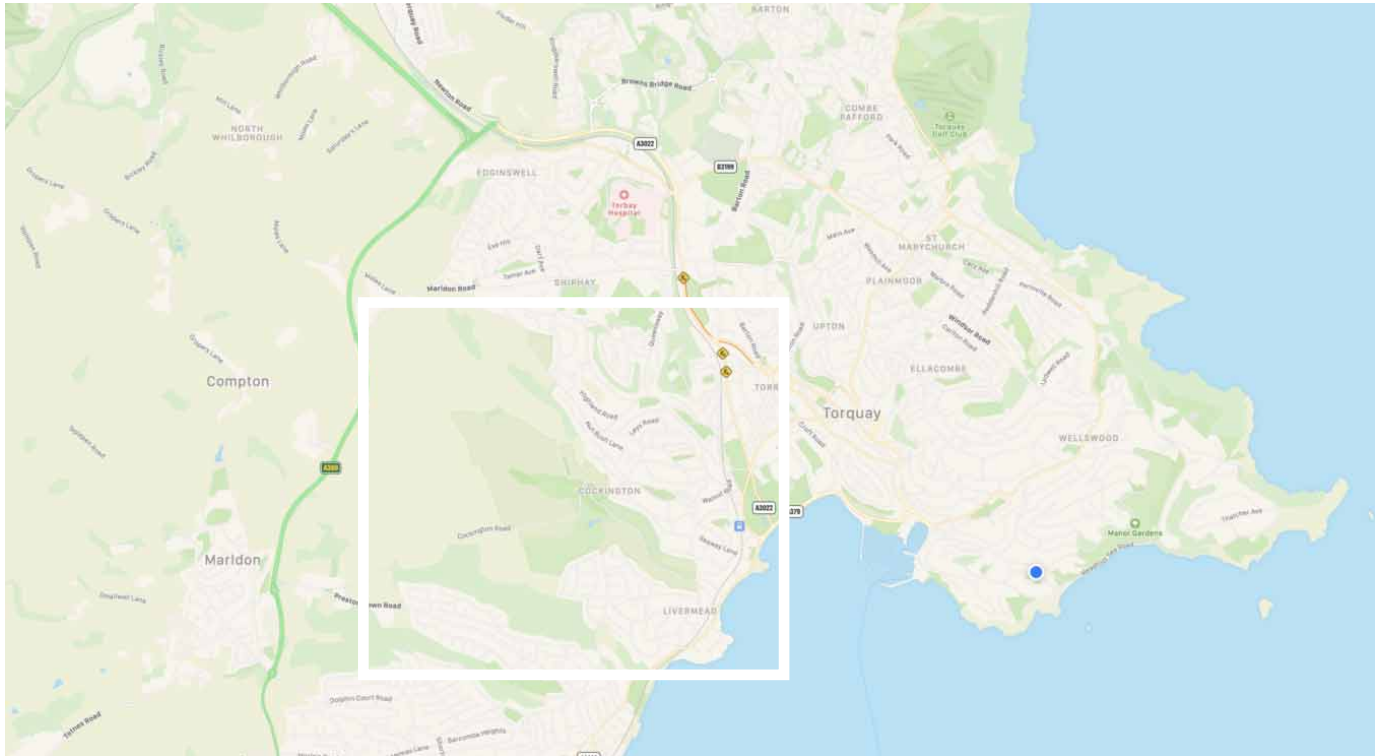
We will talk about this later in the profile, but suffice to say we are very excited by them and have great hopes that our new incumbent will be equally keen to lead and work with us to consolidate and grow what has been achieved.

There is also so much we still want to do.

We by no means have a 100% success rate in everything we try to do, but we do it together and we do it for the love of God.

On balance we're pretty responsible. Finance to fabric to safeguarding, all are managed well. So here now is a little more of the where we are and what we've done: the facts of the matter.

The PCC



1. Cockington Church
2. St Matthew's Church
3. St Peter's Church
4. Vicarage

Where we are (our parish)

Our parish is on the west of Torquay, one of England's major holiday resorts with a population of over 8,400. It has a mixture of hotels and guest houses, as well as Victorian to modern private housing and a large post-war, formerly council-owned estate.

Cockington Church is located in a small, highly picturesque village with a small population but with a high visitor footfall throughout the year as it has long been a major tourist attraction. The houses in the village are above average in cost for the area and the owners are mostly retired. The row of alms houses within the village is still administered by a Trust.

The immediate area around St Matthew's Church is mainly Victorian housing and it was an influx of people into this area that led to the church being built in the late 1800s.



St George & St Mary (Cockington Parish Church)



Our churches

The parish comprises three contrasting churches - two are active, one is mothballed. The two active churches fulfill slightly different functions due to their locations. Although there are no Church of England schools in the parish, we value our links with Cockington Primary School in Chelston, and there is also a Roman Catholic primary school in Queensway.

St George & St Mary (commonly known as Cockington Parish Church)

Norman in origin, the building was first commenced in 1068 and expanded over the next three centuries. Until 1881 Cockington was a private chapel to Cockington Court which is immediately adjacent. Located in picturesque parkland it is one of the most visited parish churches in Devon.

Of particular note are the pulpit which is reputed to have been salvaged from a Spanish Armada ship grounded in Torbay, as well as the intricately carved rood screen. The Church is open every day and many visitors light a votive candle which contributes generously to the budget! Bells have been a feature at Cockington since the 13th century. Our peal of six bells herald each Sunday service.

Cockington is extremely popular for weddings and baptisms (we would expect approx 20 to 40 respectively in a typical year). It also has significant potential given visitors to the house and events in the park.

St Matthew's Church, Chelston

Charles Nicholson. Opened in 1884 it is a prime example of Victorian church architecture and thought to be Sir Charles's best. His brother, Archibald, was responsible for all of the stained glass windows, while the incredibly ornate baptistery was created by Frank Lynn Jenkins.

The church boasts excellent acoustics and is the venue for the majority of the parishes' social and community events.

While St George & St Mary attracts large numbers of visitors, its location means it is less well situated to serve the needs of the broader parish. St Matthew's however is ideally located and is very much seen as our community hub and we have a group of volunteers from the congregation that ensure the grounds and the remembrance garden are well maintained.

Neither church has a graveyard (but both have consecrated ground for the burial of ashes). nor do they have a church hall (although St Matthew's does have an undercroft).



St Matthew's Church





St Peter's Church



The Vicarage

St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church opened in 1962 to serve the rapidly growing area of Chelston. For forty years it was the centre of a lively worshipping community. However, it was converted to a community hub, with sports area, community cafe and meeting rooms around 2010. At the start of the pandemic it was mothballed as it ceased to be viable. Its upkeep has remained the responsibility of the parish, but the parish and diocese are currently exploring possible alternative uses for St Peter's which would relieve the parish of responsibility for the building.

Fabric

Generally the church buildings are maintained (apart from major works) by members of the congregation and as such are in relatively good condition for buildings of their age. There are reserved funds for roof maintenance.

Vicarage

This five-bedroom house is situated in a quiet close within five minutes' drive of all three of the churches and is in good condition. The views from the front of the house look right across Torbay to Brixham and Berry Head.



Indoor Christmas Market at St Matthews



Summer fayre



Who we are and what we've been up to

There are 77 members on our electoral roll. We have a churchwarden and a number of assistant wardens ensure that there are strong teams at both churches. Our PCC has 9 members and meets about every three months.

The church-going demographic of Torbay is heavily weighted towards the over 60s (and that is reflected in our congregations) yet we believe there is potential to grow our congregation by attracting both older and younger age groups, especially families.

At the heart of what we do is sharing the love of Christ and we do that in various ways and with all ages:

A number of our parishioners visit those who are sick or housebound, and go out of their way to provide transport for those who would otherwise not be able to attend.

We have recently started visiting a local care home and hope to formalise that a little more (after all, they graciously accepted our carol singing!).

We run a regular Friday morning shop and monthly cafe which serves as a 'touching place' for the community and those who need to share. It is an ideal opportunity to welcome people in to an informal gathering where they can find companionship and experience the love of our Lord.

Newcomers, whether for an event or regular worship, are warmly welcomed into the church family. Much to our delight, a number of our wedding couples have returned following their big day, and one pair from Yorkshire are actually considering relocating!

This year we have had Spring, Summer, Autumn and Christmas markets at St Matthew's, with a number of stalls run by non church-goers in our community. The markets are always very inclusive and happy events, as well as contributing to church funds.

A new departure in 2022 was a service for Apple Day at Cockington. It was specifically tailored for the event and the families who attended; a craft workshop was subsequently held in the grounds of the Court. More recently the church has become an integral stakeholder in a newly formed group (along with the Court, the Trust, the Village and Traders) whose role is to co-operate and collaborate in drawing the community closer together. So we hope to repeat and develop our Apple Day involvement.



Crib service



Cockington bellringers



Mulled wine at Carol service



Church shop

Who we are and what we've been up to (cont.)

Becoming familiar and accessible to everyone is an important part of our witness. For that reason we held a lay service of carols and readings (one was scripture) which was preceded by mulled wine and shortbread biscuit. Over 140 people attended and there was participation from the local traders and community. Equally we made St Matthew's available for a local school to hold their carol services (in shifts!).

We have a great awareness of those within the larger community who, although not members of the church, are active collectors for the local food bank and committed to supporting welfare issues. Unfortunately due to the nature of our buildings we are not capable of contributing by hosting the Winter Night Shelter which runs in the bay.

We have good relations with our neighbouring parishes and would hope that the new incumbent would foster an even closer relationship with them.

We envisage and eagerly anticipate that in the not too distant future we will become part of a wider mission community, with all the opportunities and challenges which that will present.

Cockington Parish Churches was live.
December 24, 2022 at 1:59 PM · 🌐



Reach more people with this video
You could reach up to 730 people daily by boosting your video for £14.

Cockington Parish Churches
October 15, 2022 · 🌐

Don't forget tomorrow is Apple Day at Cockington and we'll be starting the day with a special family service at 10.00am. Hope you can join us!

Technology and outreach

Technology and social media have facilitated our outreach and offers great potential for furthering engagement with our community and beyond.

New websites were created in 2022 and, as they are gaining traction, we are receiving a number of enquiries.

Our engagement via Facebook has recently been revived and we are rebuilding our following on the channel which, for the first time, has included live streaming of our carol services. Facebook posts also delivered 13 adults and 8 children to our first crib service in years.

Eventbrite was used for the first time this year to advertise and manage the Carols by Candlelight services on Christmas Eve (approx. 700 booked). We now intend to engage this group by email and are looking to reactivate the currently semi-dormant 'Friends of Cockington' as a vehicle to do so.

We aim to introduce an Instagram channel in 2023 as part of our desire to engage with a younger demographic within our community.

We have also joined Nextdoor an online neighbourhood community which enables us to target locals in the immediate vicinity of our churches.



Our worship

Since the departure of our last parish priest in January 2022 we have been very fortunate in that two members of the clergy team (an Associate Vicar and PTO Priest) have continued to lead our worship to great effect and therefore we have seen no diminution in attendance, indeed to the contrary. They are both very happy to continue assisting the new incumbent in whatever way they can.

Our parish sees worship as a priority. We meet to worship throughout the week, making use of beautiful spaces in both churches. Services are usually Eucharistic. We also place importance on Home Communion, and hope to build a team to develop this further.

We have a monthly all-age service to encourage a wider participation in worship with our baptism families in mind.

At Cockington Church the service on a Sunday uses the traditional language and has a typical congregation of 20 - 30. It has a popular mid-week noon communion service which attracts up to 12 regular communicants but swells in the summer months with the addition of visitors. At St Matthew's Church we hold a modern language service also with approximately 20 - 30 worshippers.

We also hold several special services. There is an annual Valentines Service for couples to be married that year. Our Christmas Carols by Candlelight services which are held at 2pm 4pm and 6pm on Christmas Eve (each attract around 250 participants). Our Confirmation and Advent services have been held more recently at St Matthew's as well as Midnight Mass. We are eager to explore a wide range of Christian traditions.

We have a weekly prayer meeting, and study groups during Lent and Advent. This year in Easter Week we had a full week of meditations and a vigil and are thinking about an Agape meal and Sunrise service for 2023.

A recent new initiative, Kids Church, takes place once a month. It is at a very early stage of development but all baptism families for the last five years have been invited. We also hope that those who came to the recently instituted crib service may return and try Kids Church too.

We have a committed, versatile organist supporting a wide range of worship music in both churches. Our small, but highly dedicated choir is supplemented by singers from other parishes on special occasions.



Our finances

We are not a rich parish, but neither are we poor and what we have is carefully managed. There are no financial black holes (to our best knowledge!). Parish income in 2021 was £52,000 and we are proud that we meet our common fund contribution in full each year. Most giving from parishioners is via standing order.

There are also various reserve funds for maintenance of the fabric.

We have several ongoing fund raising activities including a church shop which raises £80 - £90 a week. Activities such as our Christmas Indoor Market this year raised £1,700.00. Votive candles at Cockington raise up to £6,000 per annum.

We have also recently introduced a facility to collect donations online which can be accessed via a terminal at Cockington or via our church websites. Bearing in mind visitors to Cockington number in the thousands, this new form of collection has great potential and we have developed point of sale material to stimulate interest from those casual visitors.

**St George & St Mary
Cockington**
Parish of Cockington

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Welcome to St George and St Mary, or as it is more commonly known Cockington Parish Church. For over 950 years it has survived not only all that mother nature has thrown at it, but also other interruptions such as the Reformation and wars both civil and global. But through it all Cockington Church has prevailed and the building you see today remains virtually unchanged from c.1400.

Yet the battle continues. Loving and often costly maintenance on the fabric is ongoing. Added to which there are the expenses associated with keeping the church open every day of the year. In 2021 these amounted to £142 a day. We receive no external financial support to cover costs. It is only the generosity of parishioners and visitors such as yourself that help preserve this beautiful building for future generations. Therefore for every pound we receive we are truly grateful. And the dragon is too.

Thank you. DONATIONS CAN BE MADE VIA THE ADJACENT TERMINAL ►►

Fundraising banner in Cockington Church



Torquay



Walnut Road, Chelston



Cockington Village



Cockington Court

The English Riviera – a beautiful challenge

For many the thought of moving to Torquay is a dream fulfilled. It has one of the most pleasant climates in the country and of course is located in beautiful South Devon, one of the prime holiday destinations in the UK. With beaches aplenty and Dartmoor on its doorstep it offers much for all ages.

It has some excellent schools and the cost of living is lower than other parts of the country. Summer of course sees the town at its busiest and tourists join us at our Sunday services. Yet there is a more difficult side to the bay too.

Like many coastal economies where hospitality is the major employer and minimum wage the norm, there are areas of deprivation; one ward in a neighbouring parish is ranked as one of the poorest in the country.

That said Torbay has qualified for substantial government assistance in its "levelling up" strategy and the resort has seen an upturn in investment with the construction of several new hotels. Nevertheless the current recession is proving difficult for many families and there too will lie a challenge for our churches and the communities they serve



Our hope

We know that a perfect match does not exist. What does, however, is a meeting of minds, a shared hope, an ambition to grow and a mutual accommodation. In our interregnum we have met regularly, taken care of our churches and congregations, and started new initiatives.

We would welcome wholeheartedly and support someone who can come with us and lead us on our journey.

So, having said that, we hope that you would be:

Open-hearted, open-minded - and with a good sense of humour!

Ready to listen, to encourage, to share - and to act!

An inspiration to our parish – living and sharing the love of God in the community

Prayerful - and helping us to be the same

Our shepherd - filled with the love, generosity (and forgiveness!) of God

Our teacher - keen to share and explore our faith further

Ready to jump right in.

We want to bring more people in to learn a little about the love of God. We really want to meet you.

In conclusion

We would hope that our priest would be able to make full use of both churches, with the help of a willing congregation, both for worship and also for outreach in all its various forms.

We would welcome a priest who would feel able to engage with the realities and problems of daily life, both in leading our services and in reaching out to those of all ages in our parish. Pastoral work is something we place importance on, encouraging and supporting people with the love of God, and helping more people to come to know about our Christian faith. We hope that our incumbent would lead us in this.

We are very much looking forward to working alongside a kindred spirit who will stir up the Holy Spirit not only in our congregation but in the community at large.

Amen.

