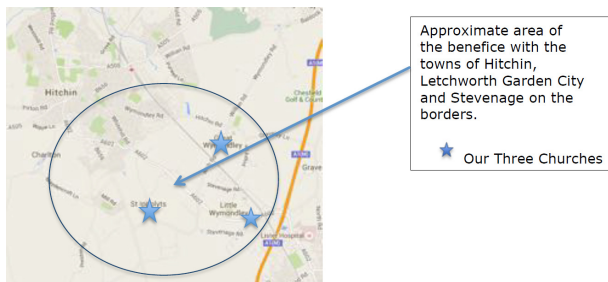


Ginni's new parishes

Extracts from their Parish Profile

Together the three parishes form the green cushion between Stevenage and Hitchin/Letchworth Garden City. They are surrounded by attractive countryside with good potential for walking. All three are close to junction 8 of the A1(M) and communication is good by road, rail and air, as is access to London. Luton Airport is only 20 minutes away by car.



The historic market town of Hitchin, which is only 2 miles from the Benefice, has a variety of shops, supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, inns and banks.

St. Ippolyts incorporates the village of that name together with the settlements of Langley, Gosmore and Little Almshoe and extends up to the southern outskirts of Hitchin. **Little Wymondley** parish, which straddles the Hitchin to Stevenage road and includes the hamlet of Todd's Green, has outgrown its nearby neighbour namely **Great Wymondley**. All our populations comprise a mixture of established villagers and more recent newcomers.

The communities are a wide mix of social and age groups and there is housing provided by housing associations and privately owned properties. Each civil parish has a parish council, and all are part of North Hertfordshire District.

Little Wymondley has excellent playing fields, tennis courts, playground and new pavilion. The local Baptist church has a hall attached and this is used for several community events as is the school hall, which is available for hire. Little Wymondley has a proud heritage, a relatively diverse

community and paradoxically is larger than its nearest neighbour Great Wymondley. The village has several interesting houses, including the moated Wymondley Bury dating back to the 14th century. There are also a number of ex-local authority properties and other small private developments that have appeared over the years creating a very rounded community.

Within the parishes are two nursing homes and one care home. The residents enjoy visits by the incumbent, and during 2015 three minibuses were arranged to bring residents of the homes to a packed St Ippolyts church for a special afternoon service.

There is some employment in the parishes and also work in Hitchin and other local towns. Many residents of the parishes commute to London.

Within St Ippolyts parish there is a land management company employing over 40 people, a fish/aquatic nursery retailing fish and fishpond apparatus, a retailer of fireplaces and stoves, a garden nursery plus other small businesses. Little Wymondley has more employment with a small industrial estate with, amongst others, a clock repairer and a carpet retailer. There are also two second-hand car sellers.

St Ippolyts has a local store, which is open 7 days a week and three public houses, The Bull, with excellent dining, The Rusty Gun and The Bird in Hand. Little Wymondley has three public houses, the Plume of Feathers, The Bucks Head and The Hermit of Redcoats, whilst Great Wymondley has The Green Man public house.

There are two hotels in the Benefice, Redcoats Farmhouse Hotel, which provides excellent dining and, the soon to open, Needham House Hotel, a hotel and spa with facilities for conferences.

St Mary's, Little Wymondley

The church (Grade 2* listed) dates in part from the 12th century and is mostly constructed from clunch.

The newest part, the early 19th century south porch had to be replaced and this was paid for by grants from the Herts and Beds Historic Churches Trust and English Heritage. There is an on-going maintenance plan with the next item being the replacement of the south side rainwater goods. The tower clock, over 100 years old, is a village and not a church clock being originally paid for by the village to mark the coronation of Edward VII.

St Mary's, Great Wymondley

The Church (Grade 1 listed) is 12th century and is located adjacent to Church Green in the heart of the village. It is a very traditional unspoilt church in a rural setting. There is a rare example of an apsidal chancel.

The tower has 6 bells of which the fifth bell has rung since the reign of Elizabeth 1st.

Externally the churchyard remains open for burials and cremations as well as having areas of open grass, which are managed as natural meadow as part of the Living Churchyard Scheme. A Lichen survey has revealed extremely rare species.

Over the past decade the church has had nearly £250,000 spent on it. Naturally the task of maintaining the church from the C12 is never ending and our latest Quinquennial review has highlighted some further repairs that must be undertaken but not thankfully on the same scale as the past decade

In the midterm we also have an aspiration to install a kitchen and toilet, move the bell-ringing chamber to a raised floor and potentially review how we could make the seating more flexible to allow a wider community use of the church

St Ippolyts Church

The Church (Grade 1 listed) has existed on its present site for more than 900 years but it has been added to over the centuries. It was substantially restored in 1877/8.

The church is floodlit each evening from dusk till late. Quinquennial inspections have been carried out on schedule, the last of which was made in 2013. Recently a permanent ramp for the disabled at the North Porch entrance and new oak South Porch doors have been installed. New LED lighting within and outside the church has received the necessary faculty and work started in January 2016. Future work to consider includes the installation of a sink and kitchen facilities within the church itself.