

APPOINTMENT OF VICAR OF ALDERNEY

Thank you for taking the time to read the documents we have prepared in connection with this appointment.

An introduction to Alderney

Ministry in the Bailiwick of Guernsey presents some interesting challenges for clergy, and especially for those who have no previous experience of 'offshore' ministry in the Channel Islands or the Diocese of Europe. Whilst we are fully part of the Church of England and, since November 2022, have been attached to the Diocese of Salisbury, the Deanery of Guernsey operates quite distinctly from the rest of the Church of England. This is partly a consequence of our geographical separation from the United Kingdom but, more importantly, a recognition of the distinct history and culture of Guernsey.

The Bailiwick of Guernsey is, like the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Isle of Man, a Crown dependency. This means that Guernsey has independent jurisdiction in most matters; the island is governed by the States of Guernsey, and has its own legal system.

Although Alderney is itself a separate jurisdiction within the Bailiwick, its size means that, inevitably, it is heavily dependent on Guernsey.

The UK government is responsible for defence and the representation of the Crown dependencies' interests in international institutions and through the diplomatic service.

The islands of Bailiwick of Guernsey are delightful places to live and work. But living here is not without its challenges. The Channel Islands have a reputation for being 'wealthy tax havens'. Although it is true that the Bailiwick of Guernsey is a low tax economy and that some residents on each of the islands are extremely wealthy, most people live with the same strains and stresses, both financially and emotionally, that one would find anywhere in the United Kingdom.

The Bailiwick of Guernsey is facing significant financial challenges, caused in part by an increasingly large number of people who are retired, thus reducing the number of people in active employment who can contribute to the States of Guernsey through income tax and social security payments. That there is no easy solution to Guernsey's economic problems was demonstrated by the recent debates in the States of Guernsey about proposals for changes to the Island's tax system.

Alderney is full of delights ... but it's not perfect

If that is true of the Bailiwick as a whole, Alderney presents unique challenges and opportunities.

Alderney is not immune from the financial and social stresses mentioned above: although it is a separate jurisdiction in many ways, with its own government (the States of Alderney), Alderney's economy is closely linked to that of Guernsey. Alderney relies on Guernsey for the provision of many public services.

Although there are well-established transport connections to England from Alderney (and between Alderney and Guernsey), travel is not cheap and is sometimes affected by adverse weather conditions.

I write this to underline the fact that ministry in Alderney requires a greater degree of emotional and spiritual resilience than might be necessary for clergy in England, who may have easier access to family, friends and other support networks.



The Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Reverend Stephen Lake, with the Dean of Guernsey, the Very Reverend Tim Barker

Living and exercising ministry in Alderney

Having said all that, for the right person, Alderney can be a fascinating and very rewarding place in which to live and minister. The weather is generally better than in many parts of England. There is access to beautiful cliff walks and beaches. The culture and history of the Island emphasise to people moving from the UK that Alderney is both familiar and different.

The Vicar of Alderney has an established place in the community, and many opportunities to be involved in the whole life of the island. Whilst the Vicar has considerable independence, this is exercised alongside accountability to the Bishop of Salisbury, through the Dean of Guernsey. The Vicar will be strongly encouraged to join Chapter and other Deanery meetings in Guernsey (either in person or through Zoom links).

Since the last Vicar, Jan Fowler, and her husband, Tony (also a priest), retired to England in May 2023, the island has been served by a series of locum priests (and bishops ...). I offer some of their reflections, which give a flavour of living and working in Alderney:

A parish priest in the south of England

Alderney is an extraordinary and unique context for someone seeking a fresh opportunity to be a priest for the whole community rather than simply a chaplain to a congregation.

The church community itself is part of all the overlapping networks of the island as a whole, and working alongside Methodist and Catholic colleagues, Christian ministers have a real and important voice in island life.

There is a real 'vicar-shaped' hole here - not simply someone to take services but someone who will thrive on being a visible public presence in the town and across the island; someone who will enjoy the changing seasons of island life and get involved in both the sacred and secular celebrations that mark the year.

The church on Alderney is one of the stand out buildings of the Channel Islands and home to an active, diverse and enthusiastic worshipping community who are used to sharing responsibility for the mission and ministry of the church here.

An archdeacon

After three weeks on Alderney, we fell in love with the Island and the church community. We found ourselves amongst a gifted and committed lay team at St Anne's, who during the vacancy have invested in lay training to lead worship and offer pastoral care. Alderney offers a very different way of life to the mainland, less individualistic and more community focused with few borders between church and wider Island community. St Anne's is a relatively large congregation compared to the UK mainland average and there is a significant opportunity to grow the congregation further. There are significant opportunities to reach out to young families on the Island. Ecumenical relations on the Island are strong and churches work together to serve and witness to the whole community.

A parish priest in the Midlands

The people of St Anne's church have a tangible depth and quality of faith in their worship that is rooted in the Eucharist, prayer and engagement with scripture. Island life is woven into the church life of St Annes and this provides breadth, depth and variety in a small space where you are never far from the sea.

A retired bishop

My short experience of Alderney, as a 'locum' priest, opened up a series of experiences that I had not expected, but were and remain important. The island itself, for me, has a raw beauty: crags and cliffs of some of the coast line; reeling and plunging gannets; the silence and stillness of hovering Peregrine Falcons. My wife and I didn't walk far before coming across numerous fortresses, gun-

emplacements and massive look-out posts; their eery silence 'speaking' of a troubled history, that in different ways is still troubled! There were small but telling signs of the suffering of many forced labourers on the island in the 1940s. On the other hand, St Anne's Church and its people seemed to me to be able to hold this strange paradox of beauty and suffering in the context of its daily life of prayer and the Eucharist. The undemonstrative but gentle demeanour of the people were a gift to me, but that needs nurturing and affirming, through priestly presence. Small though the island is, therefore, its spiritual, natural and historical impact, given openness to it, can be beyond measure. Thank you St Anne's, from both of us, for the opportunity for me to be your priest even if only for brief time, but also for us both to be your friends.

A retired priest

Alderney is a wonderful existence for the right priest that God is calling to this ministry. The church building is magnificent. The vicarage is large, well-appointed and modern. The church community seems to be cohesive and friendly, as do all the other folk I have met.

Background information

More information about the Deanery of Guernsey can be found at www.churchofengland.org.gg

If you are interested in discovering more about the distinctiveness of ministry in the Channel Islands, I encourage you to read the report of *The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on the relationship of the Channel Islands to the wider Church of England* (available [here](#)) and the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Channel Island deans and the Bishop of Salisbury* (available [here](#)).

Practical information

We are committed to the wellbeing and flourishing of our colleagues. The Deanery of Guernsey provides an enhanced stipend, to take into account the higher cost of living in the Bailiwick of Guernsey and the lack of the HLC concession for clergy in parsonage houses. Travel grants are paid for clergy and their dependants, to enable them to travel to the UK to keep in touch with family and friends and for holidays. Health insurance enables clergy and their families to access GPs without paying the usual fees. We also pay the cost of annual retreats and supervision.

The post is offered initially as a 50% role, with the provision of the vicarage and 50% of the enhanced Guernsey stipend (currently £17524; but likely to be £18,400 from 1 April 2024, subject to the decision of Guernsey Deanery Synod). We are in discussion about whether the stipend can be increased to 100%, but may not know whether this will be possible until the summer of 2024. *There is no assumption that a priest who wishes to accept a part time appointment would be required to agree to a full-time appointment.*

The expectation of the 50% role is working for three days (of which Sunday morning counts as a half day).

The Vicar will also be entitled to receive a payment of £225 as a contribution towards the cost of private health insurance (with additional payments of the same amount for other dependents living with the Vicar). The Vicar may either receive this as a cash sum, if appropriate private health cover is in place or contribute a similar amount to obtain full cover under the scheme. An annual travel grant of £475 per person will be paid for the Vicar, for his or her spouse and for any dependent children. Additional, discretionary, grants are also available from time to time.

The Vicar will also be entitled to claim fees for any baptisms, weddings and funerals. On the basis that fees will be paid in respect of the occasional offices, the time spent in that regard is in addition to the working time described above. The post will be pensionable.

The Deanery of Guernsey is committed to the best practice in safeguarding (in which we are supported by the Revd Jon Honour, one of the vice deans, who is the Deanery Safeguarding Lead, and by the Diocese of Salisbury's safeguarding team). The Deanery's safeguarding policy can be found [here](#).

Alderney is a good, and fascinating, place in which to live and minister for anyone who comes with their eyes open and with good emotional and spiritual resilience.

Next steps

The parish profile, further information about the post, the application form and the confidential declaration can be found at www.churchofengland.org.gg/vacancies

If you would like to discuss the post and ministry in Alderney, I would be delighted to speak to you.

If you think that this might be the right role for you, we would be delighted to receive your application by email no later than midnight on **Friday 19 January 2024**.

Interviews will be held in Guernsey and Alderney in February (the dates will be agreed with the interview panels and the shortlisted candidates). Full expenses will be reimbursed for the candidates and spouses.

Whilst there is no expectation that spouses will come for the interviews, they will be most welcome. Otherwise, if the preferred candidate has a spouse or partner, we will pay the expenses for the preferred candidate to visit Alderney with their spouse or partner following the interviews.

Once the Bishop of Salisbury has given his consent to the appointment, the Dean will nominate the successful candidate to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, who will make the appointment, acting on behalf of His Majesty The King.

For further information, or for an informal conversation, please contact me by email or phone:
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Tim Barker, Dean of Guernsey, December 2023