

March 2024

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek
Bishop of Gloucester & Anglican Bishop
for HM Prisons
The Bishops' Office
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Dear Candidate

Rector of the 'Coln River' Benefice

I am delighted that you are looking at this exciting post in the Diocese of Gloucester. The Coln River group of parishes form a lively and active rural benefice with a strong sense of mutual support and teamwork, a clear commitment to mission and evangelism, and a growing sense of unity across the diversity of worship traditions (stretching from BCP to Café Church and a 'New Wine' style service). The Benefice is set to the East of Cheltenham in the heart of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has easy access to Cheltenham, Gloucester, and Cirencester. The relatively new 'community church' building in Andoversford acts as a hub for the Benefice with its shared facilities and administration support.

The Benefice sits within, and is an active participant in the life of, the North Cotswolds Deanery. The Area Dean, the Revd Canon Katrina Scott, notes that *'The North Cotswold Deanery is large geographically, but relatively small in population. All of our clergy work in multi-parish benefices, serving rural villages and small towns, which draws us closer together, and allows us to share well in reflection, planning and support. We have an excellent Chapter, many gifted and able lay leaders, and a strong Synod. We are keen to appoint a priest to this post who will work with us and with our evolving Deanery Strategic Plan. Some of the priorities coming from this plan include that we want:*

- *to see our churches flourish; in service, discipleship and spirituality, meeting the needs of our communities and reflecting God's transforming good news*
- *to re-shape ourselves so that we look outwards more of the time, with less time spent on administration and maintenance*
- *to enable a culture of collaboration, so that no clergy person, no lay leader, no parish or benefice works entirely on their own, and we want each person's job to be 'do-able'*
- *to cherish the local. God loves and is present in each of our communities. Our churches and parishes are all unique but together we can help create structures that support and facilitate our diverse mission and ministry.'*

As a Diocese we are currently engaged in an exciting deanery strategic planning process whereby every deanery has been working with an external facilitator to shape ministry, mission and the use of resources for the future, approached from a place of confidence and creativity rather than scarcity, and rooted in our vision of 'LIFE Together': www.gloucester.anglican.org/about/vision This is supported by our Culture and Values for ministry at www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/cultures-and-values-of-ministry . At its heart we want to share 'the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ', so that all people may 'know life in all its fullness.'

Continued/-

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As we continue to do this, I wish to see a church landscape of ever-increasing varied configuration with new worshipping communities emerging in new and different ways alongside inherited ministry within parishes. This is a diocese which celebrates pioneer ministry, our schools, chaplaincies and Fresh Expressions of Church, and it has been wonderful to establish a new Church Army Centre for Mission located within Gloucester.

Clergy who come to minister in this diocese need to be enthusiastic about being part of this changing landscape. It is also a diocese in which we want clergy to be nurturing people of all ages and backgrounds to live out their faith among the people and places of their week Sunday to Saturday. We are a diocese which has been strongly committed to implementing the recommendations of the 'Setting God's People Free' report and are actively involved in 'Growing Faith'. Where there is a church school or church schools in the benefice, we expect the parish priest to be a foundation governor for at least one of them, and to work with the PCC to ensure other foundation posts are filled.

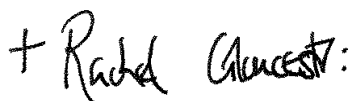
As we live this time of continued uncertainty across our country and world, it is important to underline that as a diocese we are living from a place of confidence, security and hope, and there is a deep commitment to the wellbeing of all our clergy. Furthermore, we are small enough to know each other well, to care across our traditions and rejoice in each other's gifts, while at the same time being large enough to be well resourced. You will find good support for your ministry from a dedicated team. Bishop Robert and I seek to know and be known by our clergy and place a high value on engaging with communities across the diocese and building positive networks of relationship.

I certainly don't expect you to match every aspect of this role, and the people of these worshipping communities will be partners in the gospel and share in the leadership of the parishes and the wider Benefice, but if you think that this is a ministry that has the potential to connect with your gifts and be one in which you will be able to be fulfilled and grow then I very much hope you will apply so that we can further discern together if this is the right place for you.

In short this is an exciting post, full of opportunity and with the potential to be immensely rewarding.

If you have any questions or want to know more, please do not hesitate to contact Tony Barron, part of the lay leadership team and the chair of the team that has developed the Benefice Profile, on 07785 376518. Applications should be returned to Debbie Long, PA to the Archdeacon of Cheltenham, at dlong@glosdioc.org.uk by 10.00am on Friday 26 April 2024. Interviews will be held in the Benefice on Friday 17 May 2024.

With all good wishes and thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Rachel Gloucester:". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek
Bishop of Gloucester