

## **Parish Profiles – Avening & Cherington**

The villages of Avening and Cherington are situated approximately one mile apart in the beautiful rural area of the Cotswolds, yet within easy distance of the larger towns of Gloucester, Cheltenham, Bristol and Bath. There are good rail links to London, with Kemble station within a 15 minute drive away; and easy access to the M5 and M4 motorways.

The Cotswolds is the largest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales, famous for its beautiful countryside, ancient villages and historic market towns. We are situated in a wonderful area for walking and horse riding, and are an ideal base from which to explore the wider region.

The parishes of Avening and Cherington were united in one benefice in 1975.



Holy Cross, Avening



St Nicholas, Cherington

## **AVENING**



The Church of the Holy Cross, Avening, is a living active and inclusive church which welcomes worshippers of every denomination to join in the Sunday services.

Christians have worshipped in this ancient church since its consecration in 1080, and there is some evidence that a Saxon church previously existed on this site. The beautiful Grade 1 listed building has many Norman features and a remarkable stone vaulted ceiling in the chancel, with various additions and amendments being made over succeeding centuries. The church was commissioned by Queen Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, and royal links continue to this day. In 2011 the present Queen attended Avening church for the christening of her first great grandchild.

[www.aveningchurch.info](http://www.aveningchurch.info)





## **The Avening Area**

Avening is a village of approximately 1200 people. There is a strong community feeling, with a number of families who have lived here for many generations, while many new families have also been attracted to the village. Facilities and organisations within the village include:

- A very good primary school
- Two pubs
- A social club
- Village hall
- Playgroup and baby & toddler group
- Youth club catering for 7-13 year olds
- Avening & Cherington Cricket club
- W.I.
- Avening Silver band
- Over 60s lunch club
- Book club and cinema club
- Choir – ‘Almost Angels’ – who take part in our major services
- Several skittles teams

Both the social club and the village hall regularly host events such as line dancing and yoga, as well as providing a venue for parties and wedding receptions.

Gatcombe Park, with its world famous horse trials, is almost on our doorstep, as is the Minchinhampton Golf Club. Within a very short distance are the National Arboretum at Westonbirt, and the Slad Valley which was immortalised by Laurie Lee in his book ‘Cider with Rosie’.

The neighbouring market towns of Nailsworth and Tetbury provide a mix of very good independent shops, as well as major supermarkets, and both have annual Festivals. The Nailsworth Festival in the spring offers a week of concerts, drama, talks, exhibitions etc., and Tetbury holds a music festival each autumn.



It is our hope that our new priest will help us to strengthen our links with the wider village community, and particularly with our primary school, whose headmistress is keen to further develop the relationship between church and school. The school use the church for their own Christingle service, and they also hold a Remembrance Service around the Millennium Cross in the churchyard, where they lay small crosses bearing the names of all the men from Avening who lost their lives.

## Church Life & Services

During the vacancy we have benefited from a variety of priests taking our services. We have recently changed the pattern of our services each month to include two services of Holy Communion at 11am, and one service of Evensong at 5pm at which Cherington join with us. On the fourth Sunday of each month, we join Cherington for their 9.30am service.

A good number of children participate in the Easter and Christmas services, and we are keen to reintroduce the Sunday school, which used to be held in the Brydges Chapel during the 11am service. We would also like to develop closer links with older children and teenagers, perhaps through the school and the youth club.

A number of special services are held during the year, including:

- Harvest Festival – followed by a harvest lunch
- Remembrance Sunday, with wreath laying at the Millennium Cross in the churchyard (Cherington join with us for this service).
- Crib Service at 4pm on Christmas Eve – very popular with the children
- All Souls
- Special services throughout Holy Week
- Christmas Eve midnight service
- Nine Lessons & Carols

This year we will have five weddings celebrated in the church, and several baptisms.



Crib Service

There is an active PCC, which meets four or five times a year, and which contains a small team of volunteers who are able and willing to carry out some minor routine maintenance of the building and churchyard. Our electoral roll is currently 37.

Avening is a very friendly village, and supportive of our fund-raising efforts, especially the annual traditional church fete, but we would love to see more of them at our regular Sunday services!

Our church team includes:

- A Lay Reader
- 2 churchwardens
- 2 sacristans
- 5 sidespeople
- A team of bell ringers
- A flower team
- Members of the congregation are encouraged to read the lessons, and to lead intercessions during the services.

Our monthly magazine, the Villager, covers both Avening and Cherington. We feel that this magazine is a valuable source of outreach to the wider community and, with the support of the parish council, is circulated free to every house in both villages, and to the small hamlet of Nags Head. Some copies are also posted to former residents (including one copy to the USA).

The church is also used as a venue for concerts, attracting many visitors from the surrounding area and further afield.

A highlight of our year (and our major fund-raising event) is the annual traditional church fete, held in June. Apart from the usual stalls selling cakes, gifts, books etc., there are children's games, delicious teas, and a fun dog show, as well as our popular duck races in the village stream. An art and craft show in the church is held on the same day, displaying work by local artists and craftspeople.







Another popular event, first introduced in 2011, is our Family History Day. Our archivist and his assistant have completed the transcription and indexing of all our parish registers back to 1557, as well as researching the names on our war memorial, and visitors travel from all over the county (and elsewhere) to view these records.

The church building is generally in a good state of repair, and our team of volunteers work hard to keep the churchyard well maintained.

## CHERINGTON



### The Village

Cherington is a small Cotswold village 3 miles from Tetbury, and one mile from the larger village of Avening. There are some 50 cottages and houses in the village (which effectively has one street which includes the lovely cottages in Pear Tree Row), a village green with its 19<sup>th</sup> century well-head, our Church and a village hall (the 'Reading Room'), with the allotments behind, and the 'Cherington Lake' a very short stroll away. We are in wonderful walking and riding country, close to Gatcombe, Badminton and Cirencester Park for horsey events, and Westonbirt Arboretum for year round walks and summer musical events. We are only a 5 minute drive from Tetbury, 15 minutes from Cirencester and Stroud, and 30 minutes from Bath.

The village, until the mid-1950's the centre of a large Cotswold farming estate, has a very good and happy social mix. There are some 30 households in the village itself, but those living in quiet parts within a mile or so of the village are very much regarded as part of the community, and many have active roles in village life. Having had a period with few children in the village, there are now a number of families with small children living in the village, who we are keen to encourage to come to church more regularly with family-friendly service times and content.



There is a pub within the boundaries of the parish, but regrettably it is a mile out of the village! There are 'big houses' at either end of the village (one of which provides the wonderful pitch for the Avening & Cherington Cricket Club), and houses and cottages of varying sizes and differing tenure in between! There are a number of rented 'Estate' cottages and three Drivers Charity cottages which are generally rented out to those working nearby (our Priest and churchwardens are the Trustees of the religious and educational charity which is supported by the rents). A free monthly parish magazine is circulated throughout the two villages.

A good indicator of the nature of our village is the fact that whenever someone moves in, someone will organise a small party to welcome them. We all care for and look out for each other, sharing happy events and support each other in times of sadness. The parish council has recently launched its website, which is steadily being enlarged – <https://cheringtonpc.org.uk>

### **St. Nicholas, Cherington**





Our church dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, is generally in a good state of repair, and has been the 'hub' of the village for many years. There are 36 on our Electoral Roll. We have a committed nucleus of about 18, and our congregation is, on average, 14 for our weekly 9.30 am service, with a substantial increase to 60 or more for Festivals. Our Parish Share is found without difficulty, and we have funds for work required following the recent quinquennial inspection. There has never been a Sunday in living memory when there has not been a service in the church, save for recent occasions when we go to Holy Cross, Avening to join their congregation for Evensong once a month.

Services - we use the Book of Common Worship for Holy Communion on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, and have shared services on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday (Evensong at Avening) and the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday (Morning Prayer at Cherington). We have coffee after Morning Prayer and some other services. Although we do not have children in the congregation each week, we are 'child friendly', and our Christingle service, the candle lit Christmas Carol Service and Mothering Sunday services draw in a good number of children each year, their activities being co-ordinated by a remarkable villager who ran a nursery school for many years. We are surrounded by a number of large farms, and our Harvest Festival is very well supported, with a 'bring & share' supper afterwards.

We are very keen to try to encourage more people to come to Church. We are not averse to wider use of the Church in the future (we have had an occasional musical evening), although some events are held in the village hall opposite the village green. Families with small children come to church from time to time, and on one occasion during the vacancy a young father led a service, which was an exciting experience, and indicates our preparedness for change – we are not 'set in our ways'!

Our Churchwarden has served for 2 separate periods, and a second Churchwarden is being recruited to take over from a long serving warden who has recently retired. Our Churchwardens have led

services occasionally, and our Treasurers have kept our heads well above water. We are fortunate to have an excellent organist, who is also the ever efficient Secretary of the PCC. We have willing readers and sidesmen. Our team of bell ringers has been below strength in recent years, so the ringers from Avening and elsewhere visit us for special occasions. We hope to rebuild our own team in the future to ring our 5 bells. There is a talented Flower Team and an efficient churchyard 'tendress', and a cleaning rota. Our Visitors' Book records many compliments on the way in which the church is kept open and looked after.

A highlight of the Cherington year, and a major contributor towards Church, Cricket Club and Reading Room finances, is the long established Cherington Flower Show and Fete, held towards the end of July – this year will be the 71<sup>st</sup> Show, and almost every villager plays an important part in making the event a great success. The day draws to a close with a special short thanksgiving service followed by a village supper in one of the marquees.



Other events are held from time to time (e.g. a well-attended Quiz Night each year) to raise funds for the Church, either for general maintenance and expenses or if there is a particular project requiring funds – e.g. rehanging the bells, upgrading the slightly forlorn heating system ... . For the last two years a Christmas Fair has been held at Toad Hall on a local farm to raise funds for carpets and a craftsman-made curtain rail for the church, and a mobile access ramp for the village hall.

We are looking forward with excitement to the arrival of the priest whose new ministry will be in our villages, and have willing hands and hearts to help him or her. We would like our priest to be able to be our Minister and our friend, to meet our spiritual needs and to spread the Christian message by understanding, communicating with and caring for all of the parishioners, including those who do not presently come to church. Recent suggestions are that our priest could perhaps make contact with any new arrivals to welcome them to the village and encourage them to come to Church, and that it might be possible to have an informal village 'get together' for an hour or so every couple of months in the (unlicensed!) Reading Room, with our priest if it was convenient – this might well encourage some 'reconnections'.



## **The Rectory**

The rectory is a modern 1980's detached property on a small development close to the church in Avening. The accommodation comprises: 4 bedrooms, bathroom, WC and separate shower, 2 halls, study, living room, dining room, kitchen, utility, and cloakroom, garage. The property was recently completely refurbished.



## Greetings from the churchwardens and members of the Parochial Church Councils of Holy Cross, Avening and St Nicholas, Cherington

We are looking and praying for a priest to come and live and minister within our village communities:

- who is prayerful and grounded in the Word of God
- who will move people to experience God's love
- who will develop the spiritual life of the church
- who will be warm, compassionate and ready to listen to those whom she/he meets both inside and outside the church congregation
- who will welcome all Christian denominations to our services
- who may experiment with newer forms of worship/fresh expressions whilst valuing the established forms of worship
- who will develop links with young people and families
- who is able to tap into the huge potential congregation within these villages (as demonstrated by the large numbers attending our 'special' services such as Easter and Christmas)
- who has a sense of humour!
- who is able to lead, but content to delegate
- with an interest in pastoral work with the aged, sick and lonely – "a people priest, someone to pray with us at home in those times of need as well as the happy ones".

NB – we do not expect our new priest to be able to fulfil all these criteria!

### Vision Statement

Our vision is that we:

- act as the Body of Christ in the world
- reflect and respond to the love of God by:
  - the quality of our worship and fellowship
  - our sensitive, respectful and supportive concern for the needs of body, mind and spirit of people of all ages without distinction both in our community and that of the wider world
  - our care of the natural world

We offer you:

Our prayers and commitment to work with you, sharing the load

Hospitality, a warm welcome, friendship and a preparedness to move forward

Duck races, and lots of fun at our annual Avening church fete & Cherington Show

Shared rejoicing when times are good

Understanding when times are darker

Beautiful countryside and thriving village communities