

PARISH PROFILE FOR

THE PARISHES OF CASTLE EATON,
KEMPSFORD with WHELFDOR and THE MEYSEYS

in the South Cotswolds Team Ministry
Cirencester Deanery
the Diocese of Gloucester

Welcome

Thank you for taking an interest in this post in the South Cotswolds Team Ministry, caring for the communities of Castle Eaton, Kempford & Whelford and The Meyseys. You will find three able and enthusiastic PCCs and good supportive people with whom to work.

The South Cotswolds Team comprises some 15 parishes and 22 churches stretching from Ampney Crucis, near Cirencester in the west to Lechlade in the east; and from Castle Eaton in the south to Winson in the north. We have four stipendiary clergy and one house-for-duty clergy; two SSM priest colleagues, one of whom has recently moved into Meysey Hampton, a number of Readers - including one based at Kempford; and supportive retired clergy colleagues. We also have a full-time Youth Worker.

We are working hard on what it means to be a 'Team' across a large area – the South Cotswolds - and how we use our skills, gifts and opportunities together in building the kingdom of God here in this place. The good news is that members of the Team get on really well together and we enjoy working with each other! We believe in supporting each other and having fun – along with all the other things we have to do. You will be a key member of our Team.

We have been looking at how to deploy our resources to best effect and have recently created a new grouping of parishes to be served by a full-time stipendiary priest who will cover the parishes of Castle Eaton, Kempford & Whelford and The Meyseys. This grouping has five church buildings and two small church primary schools at Kempford and Meysey Hampton.

We are looking for someone who is willing to be a visible presence in these parishes and draw them together, as seems most appropriate locally; use the skills and talents of local people – including a Reader and SSM clergy person; work with the Team Youth Worker to develop youth related activities particularly within the parish of Kempford. A part of your role would be to serve as a Foundation governor at the two CofE schools, and lead collective worship regularly, which is highly valued by each school. There is a small grant-making charitable Trust at Kempford (2 short meetings a year) where the Team Rector is currently a Trustee. This role could be taken up by our new Team Vicar, if so wished. There may also be opportunities to make links with RAF Fairford – a base used by the USA Air Force, which will be growing significantly in numbers in coming years.

We would also like you to offer your particular gifts or expertise to the wider team.

The Parsonage is located in Kempford near the church. It is a good, relatively modern, house with private manageable garden. There is easy access to Oxford, Swindon, Reading, Cheltenham, Gloucester and London.

The South Cotswolds is a beautiful place to live with excellent local schools and a very wide range of amenities. I very much hope you will consider applying for this post.

If you would like to have a conversation with me about the opportunities and possibilities this post offers, please do feel free to ring me on 01285 – 851309.

John

The Rev'd Canon John Swanton
The Rectory, Ampney Crucis, Nr Cirencester, GL7 5RY

Who we are

We are a group of three rural parishes with five church buildings in five distinct villages (and some other very small settlements), set in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, the Borough of Swindon, and Wiltshire.

We are part of the South Cotswolds Team Ministry, which enables clergy to work together and support each other, whilst having responsibility for their own 'patch'. We are part of the large Cirencester Deanery, which has a friendly chapter and active Synod.

Kempsford is the third largest centre of population (after the market towns of Fairford and Lechlade) within the South Cotswolds Team. This grouping of parishes includes some quintessentially Cotswold villages and countryside, which blends a mix of properties, from large gated homes to new developments and social housing. Hidden within the affluence are pockets of rural disadvantage.

There are great opportunities for the joys of rural ministry, alongside the challenges of real social need.

You will find welcoming communities who are looking forward to having a new clergyperson to become an active part of life in these villages and minister to those in need. You will meet people from every walk of life.

Where we live

Castle Eaton

The Parish of Castle Eaton is small enough to be friendly but large enough to be successful. With some 98 dwellings within the village and about 12 in the immediate surroundings we are a community of about 250 people. Many people commute to work or work from home and there is a very active retired community who pursue various activities and support other village societies.



There are several families within the village who are second and third generations of the village, living together in harmony with newcomers who are very keen to support village activities. Sadly, there is now no village school.

The parish comes within the boundaries of the borough of Swindon which is a unitary authority. The surrounding area is mainly under the authority of the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Councils. One of the main assets of the village is that it is nestled upon the banks of the river Thames; this being within about 15 miles of its source makes the river a very gentle flowing river in this area.

There are two working farms at either end of the village, both fully support village life and are still very important assets of our community.

There are not many Local Authority houses in the village and of those several are occupied by families who have lived there for years and the children have grown up and fled the nest to look for work, leaving their parents occupying large houses with no children living there. We believe that there are long term plans by the local authority to build more houses in the village, which may bring more children to the village.

In and around our village we have a thriving Gardening club and many regular activities in the village hall, and we have a lot of fun helping with our village fete. There is a local pub – The Red Lion – located on the Thames path.

Kempsford and Whelford

Kempsford lies between Lechlade and Fairford on the River Thames and there are references in Saxon times to the site of a royal palace and manor. It has links with Henry Plantagenet and his daughters Maud and Blanc and with John of Gaunt. Remains of the old castle lie in the grounds of the Old Vicarage, now in private hands.

The parish of Kempsford with Whelford comprises about 500 properties with additional homes in the hamlets of Dunfield and Dudgrove. There is a mix of families who have lived here for several generations and newer residents, welcomed as the village has expanded, with the result that occupations and work locations are greatly varied.



The Church of England Primary School in Kempsford is judged 'good' by Ofsted includes a thriving a pre-school – <https://www.kempsfordschool.com/>. The George, our popular, family run pub supports village events. Both Kempsford and Whelford have Village Halls, which are used for a variety of activities, including those run by the Church. The village hall in Kempsford also hosts a weekly Post Office and a monthly café.

Residents will find information on village activities and events listed on the notice boards in the villages and in the free monthly Kempsford Parish Newsletter.

The village also has its own web site at <http://www.kempsford.net/>. The PCC, Kempsford C.E. Primary, Village Hall Committee and Parish Council and The George work together on at least one joint event each year, such as the fete, which brings the whole village together. There is a bus service into the town of Cirencester (11 miles away) twice a week.



Other facilities and services are to be found in the nearby market town of Fairford, five miles away. These include the doctor's surgery, dentist, optician, a Post Office, a pharmacy, a butcher's, several small shops and restaurants, and a hotel. Market Day in Fairford is Wednesday, when the central car parking is closed off to provide space for the market stalls. The local secondary school, Farmors, with attached sixth form centre, is also in Fairford - <http://www.farmors.gloucs.sch.uk/>.

Each year RAF Fairford, which lies between Kempsford and Whelford, hosts the Royal International Air Tattoo over a long weekend in July - <https://www.airtattoo.com/>. The village of Whelford runs a fundraising Bacon Butty café and many local residents volunteer to help on the base during this event.

Kempsford is an active community, being runners up in the past for the most Vibrant Village award, and the 'Tidiest Village' competition regularly draws everyone together. Kempsford amenities include a youth club, Brownies and Rainbows packs; an active Village Hall Committee, organising several functions a year and a successful monthly lunch club; Pilates sessions, and ballet classes. Nearby Whelford village hall is also in regular use. Several residents organise fund raising events such as a chariot race to support cancer charities.

New developments in and around the village of Kempsford are expected to take place over the coming years. Bromford Housing Association have emptied most of their properties in Kempsford (some 26) to enable their current housing stock to be rebuilt. A planning application for 27 new homes is anticipated and, if granted, the new homes for rent are likely to be completed in 2021.

RAF Fairford, adjacent to the village and within the Parish, is an operational site used by the USA Air Force and is due to expand significantly by 2024 with some 860 service personnel being deployed there. Although it is anticipated that many of the service families may live some distance away, some 100 families are expected to be accommodated on the Base.

Kempsford is on the route of the Severn-Thames Canal, which is a route protected by the District Local Plan. This may be reinstated at some point in the future, particularly should it prove to be the most viable option for Thames Water to get water from the Severn to the Thames and onto London.

The Meyseys



Marston Meysey, the most northerly village in Wiltshire, is a typical small Cotswold village of 78 dwellings, all but a few grouped together either side of the village street. Most are owner occupied, although around a dozen are rented or tied houses. The population, around 120, includes a number of young families. As the village is on the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire border, parents access a variety of nearby schools including state schools in Highworth (Bristol diocese) and a few have places at the C of E primary schools in Meysey Hampton, South Cerney and Fairford. Older children attend private schools or Farmors secondary school in Fairford, which also has a sixth form.

The village has a thriving pub - the Old Spotted Cow. The Village Hall was built originally as a church school but closed in 1924 due to lack of numbers. After the closure the villagers used the building as a Parish/Village Hall, improving and maintaining it under a lease from the Diocesan Board of Education. The lease was terminated in 2004 and the village raised funds to purchase the building which is now officially designated the Marston Meysey Village Hall.

Meysey Hampton lies just off the A417 some 3 miles from Fairford. It has a new village hall and an excellent and busy pub – The Mason’s Arms! There is a cricket pitch with new pavilion in the village, which has seen a new lease of life recently as Kempsford Cricket Club have needed to find a new ‘home ground’; and there is a good play area for children.
<https://meyseyhamptonparishcouncil.wordpress.com>

The ‘outstanding’ CofE Primary School (c100 children on roll) has very positive links with the church. We expect the already excellent links can be built-on further.
<https://www.meyseyhamptonprimaryschool.co.uk>



Along the A417, not too far from the village lies a site which is home to a number of permanent mobile homes, which tend to be occupied by older people.

Meysey Hampton is also the home to the Vale of the White Horse Hunt (VWH).

The parish extends north towards the small settlement of Ready Token and includes the hamlet of Sunhill. We sometimes need to take a close look at the map to check on ecclesiastical parish boundaries!

Our Church life

The South Cotswolds Team Ministry

South Cotswold Team Ministry which was established in January 2009 and consists of 15 parishes with 22 churches and currently 6 clergy. It comes under the Deanery of Cirencester. Team services occur at various points in the year.

	Parishes -
The Rev'd Helen Caine	SSM Associate Priest
The Rev'd Dr Andrew Cinnamond	Eastleach, Lechlade, Southrop
The Rev'd Tim Hastie-Smith	Barnsley, Bibury and Winson (House-for-Duty)
The Canon Denise Hyde	SSM Associate Priest (Fairford)
The Rev'd John Partington ¹	Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington
Chris Saunders	Youth Worker
The Rev'd Canon John Swanton	Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter & St Mary, Down Ampney, Driffield & Harnhill,
The Rev'd Caroline Symcox	Fairford
You!	Castle Eaton, Kempsford & Whelford, The Meyseys

Chris Saunders is Team Youth Worker who operates across the team area - organising clubs and lunch time activities at Farmors Secondary School in Fairford, as well as mentoring individuals. He supports several church primary schools leading Collective Worship and lunchtime/afterschool clubs. He also runs residential weekends for young teenagers to explore faith in a different setting, and there is an annual trip to Romania in conjunction with Scripture Union. Chris leads a weekly 'youth group' in Fairford and Kempsford, and an 'enquirers' group – 'Thirst'.

There are a number of retired clergy who assist across the Team and we have a small number of able Readers who are willing to lead services. One of the Readers – Robert Mitchell – lives in the Parish of Kempsford and Whelford. A Self-Supporting Minister – The Reverend Kim Brown – has recently moved to Meysey Hampton and she is willing to assist with Sunday duties when she can.

The good news is that the clergy within the SCTM get on really well together, enjoy each others company and support each other and provide holiday/wedding/funeral cover etc.

Such a large geographical team has its challenges and it can be difficult to persuade people to travel too far! We operate on the basis that communities like to 'know' who their vicar is and so whilst we are all licensed to serve across the team, we each have a geographic area to cover. We have pulpit swops, so that the clergy do circulate around. The gifts of clergy are used across the team – one person has provided teaching sessions on the Gospels at different locations across the team. We have run a 'Marriage by Design Course' for couples being married in our churches, though we need to breathe new life back into this venture as uptake in 2019 has been disappointing.

We would welcome someone who has a gift(s) they want to share across the team as well within their own parishes.

¹ John Partington retires at the end of October 2019

Castle Eaton

St Mary's has a dedicated team of six PCC members enthusiastically led by our two church wardens. The whole of the PCC support and are active in all aspects of church life be that practical, administrative, pastoral and spiritual.

At present services are held each Sunday usually at 09.30 hrs. At least one Sunday service is ably led by a local lay resident. Although there is a beautiful pipe organ and a Yamaha piano, we currently do not have a regular player, so sometimes our music is via a selection of CD's and a modern computer system which gives a wide range of hymns and songs to sing.

Our weekly congregation is relatively small (about 12 to 15 souls) but very committed. The village on the whole is very supportive of the Church and many social events are well attended. We have an occasional coffee morning and once each year a Lent community lunch and a village Harvest Supper. Our special services each year such as our Christmas, Easter and Harvest services are very well attended with some sixty plus in Church.

Priority in Castle Eaton is given to providing a relaxed and friendly environment in Church which is welcoming to everyone. We hold one Holy Communion service each month along with Morning Worship and Word and Worship services.

Sadly, there are no children regularly attending Church at the moment, work needs to be done on this matter as there are a few new families with children living in the village.

We collect from every household in the village, food for the Harvest Festival which is subsequently given to the Salvation Army Rehab Team in our nearest town Highworth. We are always surprised at how much we collect and the generosity of the residents of Castle Eaton is quite amazing

We have a very keen and active group of bell ringers in the Church and work has been recently done on both bells and fixtures. There is also a well-stocked book swap area in Church which does bring people to the Church and this facility needs to be developed with the coffee mornings to encourage more attendance to church.

Our 12th Century Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade I listed) stands in a prominent position on the raised banks of the River Thames within the local conservation area. The church is open to all daily from April to November and weekends only during the winter months. Being on the Thames Path, the Church has many visitors from all over the world who admire the peace and tranquillity of the Church whilst walking the Thames Path and those who seek past connections of family and friends.

The Church yard is maintained by a rota of local residents and is kept at a very good standard. The Church was re-roofed in recent years and the building is in good repair all-round.

Although we (the regular attendees of the Church) work hard to embrace the population around our village, we feel we lack leadership and skills that will attract more people to church.

Kempsford with Whelford

The parish consists of the church of St Mary The Virgin, Kempsford, and at Whelford, the smaller St Anne's Chapel of Ease. Both are within walking distance for local residents and weddings, funerals and baptism are regularly held in both locations.

Services at Kempsford

9.30am Holy Communion held on the 1st, and 4th Sunday of the month. A Service of Word and Worship is held on 2nd Sunday of the month at 9.30am, which is led by the local Reader.

A 4pm All Age Family Service held on the 3rd Sunday of the month, bringing together young and older residents in activity linked worship led by a team.



Services at Whelford

8.30am Said Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday of the month

9.30am Sung Holy Communion on the 3rd Sunday of the month

On the fifth Sunday in the month, the service is held either in our parish or in the adjoining parish of Castle Eaton.

In addition, over the year the following services are held (usually at Kempsford):

- All Souls Service of Remembrance
- Carol Services and concerts including carol singing at The George
- Church services for the school celebrating important times in the school and Christian year
- Occasional services including Choral Evensong and Compline

Our churches are regularly used for a variety of festivals and concerts, including children's craft afternoons.



The main service on a Sunday is a Sung Eucharist with about 25 communicants, with the communion celebrated at the Nave Altar and received at the High Altar.



Lay members assist with the chalice. The choir, numbering around 12, is under the direction of a talented and enthusiastic organist/ choir mistress. Following the service, coffee and biscuits served providing a popular, informal time to socialise.

The village regularly echoes to the sound of bells rung by a dedicated team of bell ringers, including several young people.

The All Age Service is led by a small team and is aimed at welcoming families, young people and older parishioners who prefer a short, more informal structure and refreshments.

The service at Whelford on the third Sunday is followed by tea and biscuits, which are served afterwards by members of the Whelford community in the nearby Village Hall, a way of linking church with village.

Ministers are supported by

- An enthusiastic and effective PCC and two Churchwardens
- Reader
- Team Youth Worker
- Choir director
- Bell ringers
- Sidesmen (male and female)

In addition, members of the village community contribute in many different ways to the life of the church:

- Cleaning the church and arranging flowers
- Churchyard and graveyard maintenance
- Clock winding and maintenance
- Building maintenance
- Helpers with children and youth outreach
- Visiting the sick, lonely and elderly
- Taking part in 'Open the Book' and 'Prayer-spaces' in school.

St Mary's Kempsford together with St Anne's Whelford has some financial reserves. It benefits from a number of legacies which support the fabric fund and benefit the poor. Contributions are managed through the Parish Giving Scheme.

There is work to do at increasing regular giving and meeting the Parish Share – though this should be achievable when the parish has a resident clergyman again. This is true of all three parishes.

The Electoral Roll is formally reviewed on an annual basis. At last count, in December 2018, it stood at 95, with the church outreach including many more villagers.

- A small team visits the primary school weekly to present Open the Book
- House visits to elderly and infirm parishioners are made by several church members
- The church supports a thriving youth club which aimed at those from year 3 and upwards, which needs further support and development – it's a great opportunity.
- There are also mission links with Tajikistan, supported by the Scripture Union, resulting in visits by several young people to that country to support the work there, visits from people there to us, and a regular newsletter.

The Meyseys

The Meyseys are a single parish with one PCC and two churches with separate identities, which work co-operatively together.

Marston Meysey was reunited with the larger parish of Meysey Hampton in 2008 having stood alone as a separate parish since 1648. Prior to that date the village had a chapel of ease, which was administered from Meysey Hampton.

Marston Meysey is a small village with a strong community spirit who are 'determined to keep our church going'. It is open to visitors every day and special services are well attended.

St James' Church has one main service a month – which is accompanied on the excellent pipe organ (3rd Sunday at 11am); and a Family Service "Mini Meyseys" is held on the 5th Sunday, which is well attended by families and is growing. Whilst attendance is generally in small numbers on a Sunday, annual events – Harvest and Remembrance Sunday are packed out. The annual Christmas Eve Carol Service is a fixture in the diary and will attract some 120/130 people.

Marston Meysey's present church, which is grade 2 listed, is dedicated to St James and dates from circa 1875. It is a small well-built church of Cotswold stone standing in a walled graveyard adjacent to the village Hall and has good 19th century stained glass. The church which is not expensive to maintain is well cared for by the village.

The PCC host a number of fundraising events in the church including film nights, plant sales, concerts and talks, as a result of which the church finances are healthy.

Our tradition has been 'central', and we prefer the Book of Common Prayer and the RSV of the Bible.

There is an excellent community spirit in Marston Meysey. Both church and village respect and like each other and collaborate to the benefit of both.

Meysey Hampton



St Mary's Church, Meysey Hampton lies on the western side of the village near the school, the new village hall and a short walk from the pub.

There is a small group of about five people 'keeping the church going'. The 11am Sunday Service attracts some 8-12 people.

The church building is in very good condition. In recent years, a new heating system, loo and kitchenette have been installed – providing the opportunity for this building to be more widely used. The Mothers' Union have held 'Quiet Days' here. There is a good peel of bells, which visiting bell-ringers like to come to use. The church is open each day to visitors.

Three Sunday Services are held here each month: 8.30am Holy Communion on 1st Sunday; 11am Morning Worship on 2nd Sunday; 11am Parish Communion with organist on 4th Sunday. Recently, a Self-Supporting Minister has moved into the village and is willing to help provide Sunday cover.



2019 marked the 750th anniversary of the church and villagers organised an arts and crafts day to celebrate this milestone.

Present Sunday Service Schedule

	Castle Eaton	Kempsford	Marston Meysey	Meysey Hampton	Whelford
1 st Sunday	9.30am Word & Worship*	9.30am Parish Communion		8.30am Holy Communion	8.30am Holy Communion
2 nd Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Word & Worship*		11am Morning Worship*	
3 rd Sunday	9.30am Morning Prayer*	4pm Family Service	11am Parish Communion		9.30am Parish Communion
4 th Sunday	9.30am Morning Prayer*	9.30am Parish Communion		11am Parish Communion	
5 th Sunday	NB	NB	11am Mini- Meyseys*		NB

*Non-Eucharistic Service

NB – the 5th Sunday Service for Castle Eaton, Kempford and Whelford moves around but is at 9.30am.

As you can imagine, different people take services that happen at different church at the same time! We probably need to finesse some of the service times.

Our opportunities and challenges

Opportunities

There is an opportunity in these parishes and across the team to:

- exercise leadership in the Christian faith
- draw our parishes together and help us grow together
- be an active presence within the two church schools
- be a welcome and integral part of our village communities
- develop youth and community outreach
- exercise your own particular gifts and ministry
- encourage the use of our church buildings for non-worship activities
- make links with RAF Fairford (a USA airbase)
- help us develop a vision for new facilities at Kempsford Church (loo, kitchen etc)

Challenges which will be rewarding

As with any parochial role there are particular challenges to face up to, for us these include:

- securing volunteers and developing the youth 'offer' in particular in Kempsford
- addressing 'giving' and stewardship with congregations and communities
- growing church life
- looking afresh at service schedule across these parishes
- help us develop the SCTM and become more involved in the diocesan LIFE vision
- help us to be more outward looking
- exploring what to do about burials in Kempsford – the 'new' churchyard is now nearly full!

Our next Team Vicar

Should you be still interested in the post let us tell you:

It will be a challenge!

Some of the parishes within which our new Team Vicar will exercise ministry have been without a regular vicar for some years. Unfortunately, this has led to many of us having to 'make do and mend'! Some of us feel let down, and we have now developed some ideas of our own, which frankly are not working as well as they might. We need (and want) the support of a full-time vicar with the authority of that office to guide us.

[Note from the Rector – the parishes who feel this particularly have done a remarkably good job in this period of uncertainty]

What we really, really want is someone who:

- will exercise Christian leadership
- will be a visible presence in our communities
- will work collaboratively within the South Cotswolds Team Ministry
- will give youth work and community outreach a priority
- is not frightened of standing-up for what he or she wants
- will model excellent pastoral care across our area and support our pastoral care team to develop further
- can reach out to both the old and young people
- can help us address our financial challenges
- leads from the front and says what sometimes is not popular
- is not afraid of being wrong sometimes, but has the courage to say so
- likes a bit of fun and laughs and enjoys life generally
- we can trust and feel is a friend when we are in need
- believes that we are all worthy of being disciples of Jesus

So, we don't want much really, but the most important thing to tell you is:

We do not expect you to do this alone.

We will all help you – the churchwardens, PCCs, pastoral care teams, congregations, communities and team clergy. There are potentially great rewards to this post, and we will help you to succeed. If you feel that you cannot fulfil all of our requests, but are willing to learn and grow with us, we can readily accept that.

We will:

- welcome you (and your family if you have one)
- support and encourage you in your ministry
- pay your reasonable expenses on time
- provide you with a good house in Kempford
- ensure you have the time off to which you are entitled
- hold you in our prayers
- and listen to you and walk with you.

The Parsonage, High Street, Kempford, Fairford, Gloucestershire, GL7 4ET

The house available for this post was built in the grounds of the former Vicarage, near Kempford Church.



This attractive four-bedroom family home is surrounded by a Cotswold stone wall and has a garden at front and a very private garden to the rear. There is a drive which allows for some off-street parking and there is plenty more parking near the church.

It is a decent sized house with good facilities and has been well-maintained. There is a good sized study/office which has separate access created from the former garage (which can be seen in the left photo below – with green door).

It has been a happy and convenient family home to previous clergy. It is not expensive to heat (which can be an issue with some older rectories in the diocese!) Kempford has a good church primary school, village hall, pub and there are excellent facilities nearby and is also within easy access of Cirencester, Oxford, and Swindon, and the M4.

We are fortunate to have very good schools at all levels locally. Local primary schools include: Down Ampney; Fairford; Meysey Hampton; Lechlade. South Cerney is a little further afield. There is a respected prep school in Cricklade Manor Prep.

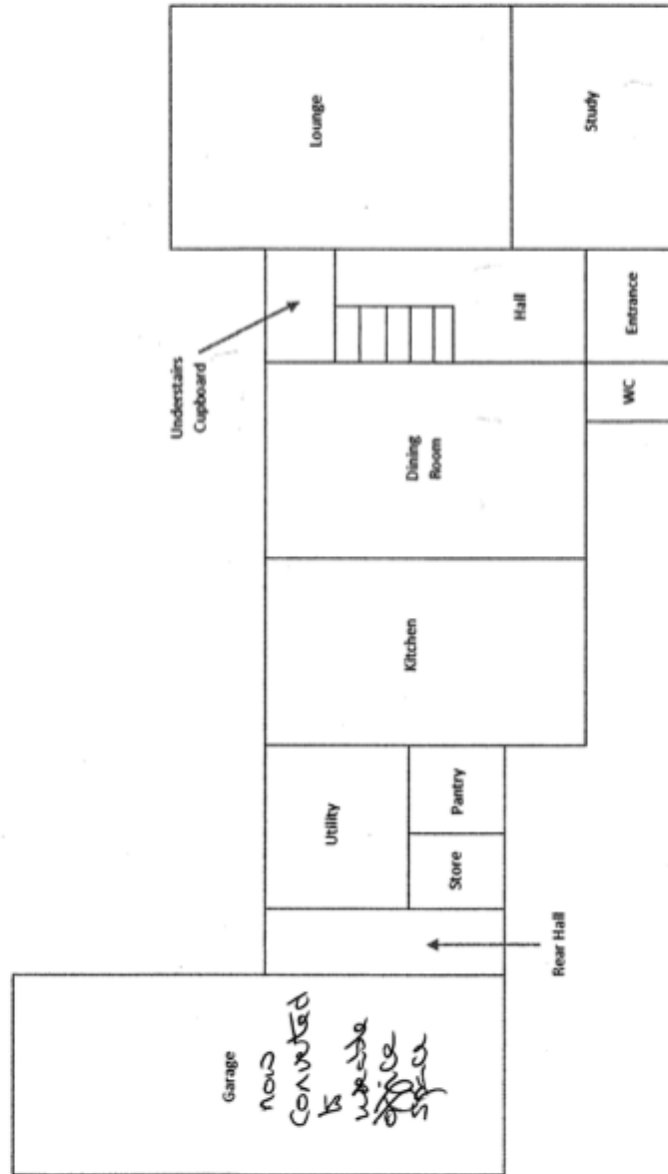
Good secondary schools can be found in Fairford Farmors; Cirencester – Kingshill and Deer Park; and at Burford. Some children travel into Cheltenham and Gloucester to grammar schools there. Marlborough College (not too far away) gives bursaries for clergy families.



Indicative floor plans are attached so you can get an idea of the layout:

Site Address: The Parsonage, High Street, Kempstord, GL74ET

Ground Floor Plan



Site Address: The Parsonage, High Street, Kempford, GL74ET

First Floor Plan

